University of Wales College, Newport

Transport and Trade in South Wales *c.*1100 - *c.*1400: A Study in Historical Geography

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Summary

Enquiries into the medieval history of south Wales have in the past tended to focus on the 'soap opera' history of the elite. This thesis differs in that it examines two aspects that are occasionally touched upon, and which are inextricably linked, but rarely considered in detail: namely the system of transport and trade. Due to the paucity of surviving evidence the study covers a time span of some three hundred years from the reign of Henry I (1100) to the Glyndŵr rebellion (1400). It charts the development of trade in an age that saw great political changes leading to the construction of planned towns and, in some places, villages, as well as complex fortifications and the introduction of Latin monasticism. The thesis examines the respective roles of the key influences on transport and trading activity, namely: (i) the players, be they the marcher lords and the Crown, the monasteries, and the merchants and traders themselves; (ii) the places such as towns and villages, ports and landing places; and (iii) the processes that influenced trade including the linkages between settlements - with particular attention to the medieval road system - and markets and fairs. A model is advanced which describes how initially autonomous open country settlements and farmsteads were integrated into a regional network, within and between lordships, as rural commodity producers and consumers grew increasingly dependent on the retail goods and services found in the market towns. These developments are charted as the population grew and rural settlement intensified, so much so that by 1300 South Wales had achieved a level of prosperity unprecedented in its history. It was not to last. Population pressure had driven families to the margins of cultivable land. The imbalance between livestock husbandry and arable risked the danger of soil exhaustion. Disease such as the sheep scab epidemic of the 1280s and the agricultural crises which affected much of Britain between 1315 and 1322 led to famine. Political and social unrest, notably the revolts of Llewelyn ap Gruffudd in 1214, Rhys ap Maredudd in 1295 and Llewelyn Bren in 1316, allied to the decline in seigneurial influence caused the South Wales economy to repeatedly falter. Outbreaks of the plague in the middle of the fourteenth century added to the woe. The Glyndŵr rebellion dealt the final fatal blow when many commercial settlements were attacked, including some that were not directly touched by earlier upsets. Prior to the Norman Conquest trade in South Wales had taken place in the open country. By 1400 the dependency that had been built in the preceding three hundred years on the transport and trading network of market towns and rural producers and consumers was shattered sending the economy into long term decline.

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed ..... Robert Weeks ..... (candidate)

Date ..... 15 July 2002 .....

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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Acknowledgements

In researching and writing this thesis I have benefited from the help and assistance of numerous friends, colleagues and organisations. Firstly, I would like to thank the research board of SCARAB, a research centre at the University of Wales College, Newport, and its director, Prof. Miranda Aldhouse-Green, for providing both funding for the project and a stimulating environment in which to undertake it. I have been fortunate that the good working relationship established with Dr. Jon. Kissock on the first 'digging' season of the Cefn Drum project in 1996 has carried over to when he became my supervisor on this project in 1998. Dr. Kissock, has provided good advice, enthusiastic encouragement, and much appreciated guidance and support throughout. Additionally, the positive enthusiasm of my second supervisor, Dr Hilary Thomas, has been most welcome. She read a copy of the thesis in its entirety and offered many valuable comments and suggestions.

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The SMR officers at the Welsh archaeological trusts were helpful in enabling me to get to get to grips with their holdings. Colleagues at the SCARAB Research Centre were also accommodating in discussing various issues, especially Mrs Chris Waite who answered my queries about the use of boats and river navigation on the Rivers Wye and Usk, and how it all fitted in to the use of the Severn Estuary. I benefited from discussion and correspondence with individuals whose own research interests considered old routeways, notable among these was Mr Ken Jermy who shared some insights from his extensive researches over many years into Roman roads and commented on the problems of identification in Wales. A great many others assisted me by answering queries, providing references or sending information, these were: Eleanor Breen, Dr. Paul Graves-Brown, Dr. Maddy Gray, Clare Green, Dr. Ray Howell, Peter Jenkins, Neil May, Jenny Micham, Ken Murphy, Berwyn Thomas and Harold Whatley.

The library staff of the Caerleon campus of the University of Wales College, Newport have been extremely helpful. I made full use of the inter-library loans section, the staff of which efficiently handled my regular flow of requests, even tracking down books that the British Library had been unable to trace. I also made frequent use of the library at the University of Wales, Swansea and was ably assisted by the staff there. Finally, my greatest debt is to my parents - both emotionally and financially - my father did not live to see the completion of this work, but his firm support for it, along with that of my mother has been invaluable. Without them none of this would have been possible.

It is customary to absolve others of any responsibility for the contents of the work and I do not intend to deviate from that here. Thus, any errors of fact, interpretation, undue emphasis or omission are entirely my own.

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A NOTE ON PLACE-NAMES

Throughout this thesis I have tended to use the Anglicised form of place-names where they are most commonly used, and Welsh/Celtic forms where they are more appropriate. Further west Celtic forms are more common, hence Dinefwr as opposed to Dinevor. However, in central south Wales it would confuse matters to refer to Swansea as Abertawe and in the east to call Newport, Casnewydd. In the words of the eminent Welsh historian Professor R.R. Davies, "Consistency and uniformity in these matters is neither possible nor, perhaps, desirable."* These sentiments are echoed here. The divergence in the form of place-names being used is one of the results of events that took place during the period that this study considers. A second key point refers to the names of counties in the study area. Throughout this thesis the pre-1974 county boundaries are generally used: Gwent, Glamorgan, Carmarthenshire, Cardiganshire and Pembrokeshire. This is because despite two substantial phases of local government re-organisation that has redrawn the political map of south Wales quite markedly, these county names remain the most recognisable and the most easily understood. Therefore, they are used in order to avoid the confusion that referring to the current county boundaries would undoubtedly create.

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*Davies, R.R. (1987) *Conquest, Coexistence and Change, Wales 1063 - 1415* (Oxford, University Press) xiv

Abbreviations

A list of some of the most common abbreviations used in this thesis

Places/organisations:

ACA	-	Archaeoleg Cambria Archaeology
CCL	-	Cardiff Central Library Archives Service
CPAT	-	Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust
GGAT	-	Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust
GwRO	-	Gwent Record Office
GRO	-	Glamorgan Record Office
NLW	-	National Library of Wales
NUMC	-	Nottingham University Manuscripts Collection
OS	-	Ordnance Survey
PRO	-	Public Record Office
RCAHMW	-	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales
Soc. Ant.	-	Library of the Society of Antiquaries of London
SARS	-	Somerset Record Office and Archive Service
WGARO	-	West Glamorgan Area Record Office

Documents:

(full bibliographical details can be found in the bibliography at the end of the thesis)

Black Book	-	*The Black Book of St. Davids . . . 1326*
Brut	-	*Brut y Tywysogion or The Chronicle of Princes: Red Book of Hergest Version*
Brut Pen. ms.	-	*Brut y Tywysogion: Penarth MS. 20 Version*
Cal. Chan. War.	-	*Calendar of Chancery Warrants*
Brit. Bor. Chart.	-	*British Borough Charters*

Cal. Inq. Misc.	-	*Calendar of Inquisitions Miscelleaneous*
Cal. IPM.	-	*Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*
Cal. Clo. Roll.	-	*Calendar of Close Rolls*
Cal. Chart. Roll.	-	*Calendar of Charter Rolls*
Cal. Fine. Roll.	-	*Calendar of Fine Rolls*
Cal. Pat. Roll	-	*Calendar of Patent Rolls*
Cal. Pembs. Rec.	-	*Calendar of Pembrokeshire Records*
Clark Cartae	-	*Cartae et Alia Munimenta quae ad Dominium de Glamorgan Pertinent*
Medieval Neath	-	*Medieval Neath Ministers' Accounts 1262 - 1316*
Taxatio	-	*Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Wallia ... 1291*
Wakeman MS.	-	Thomas Wakeman Collection in the library of the Society of Antiquaries of London
Welsh Medieval Law	-	Wade Evans, A.W. (1909) *Welsh Medieval Law, being a text of the laws of Howel the Good*

Texts and Journals:

Arch. Camb.	-	*Archaeologia Cambrensis*
Arch. Journal	-	*The Archaeological Journal*
Arch. Wales.	-	*Archaeology in Wales*
Agr. Hist. Rev.	-	*Agricultural History Review*
Bull. Board Celt. Stud.	-	*Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*
Bull. Inst. Hist. Res.	-	*Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*
Ec.Hist. Rev.	-	*Economic History Review*

GGAT Annual report	-	*Annual Report of the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust*
Gw. Loc. Hist.	-	*Gwent Local History*
J. Brit. Arch. Ass'n.	-	*Journal of the British Archaeological Association*
J. Hist. Geog.	-	*Journal of Historical Geography*
J. Econ. Hist.	-	*Journal of Economic History*
J. Trans. Hist	-	*Journal of Transport History*
J. Med. Hist.	-	*Journal of Medieval History*
Med. Arch.	-	*Medieval Archaeology*
Med. Set. Res. Group	-	*Medieval Settlement Research Group Annual Report*
Mon. Ant.	-	*The Monmouthshire Antiquary*
GLCH	-	Pugh, T.B. (ed.) (1971) *Glamorgan County History vol. III the Middle Ages*
Stud. Celt.	-	*Studia Celtica*
Welsh Hist. Rev.	-	*Welsh History Review*

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The study of trade by way of markets and fairs in south Wales during the Middle Ages has long been a neglected subject. The reasons for this are many and varied, but are, for the most part, a consequence of the paucity of surviving documents and the poor condition of those sources which do survive. In England research into medieval settlement and economy has proceeded apace whilst there has been a distinct lack of comparable progress made in Wales. The political developments of the period have been well covered by R.R. Davies, D.G. Walker, A.D. Carr and R.A. Griffiths, among others, yet the commercial aspects of everyday life have been subject to less detailed scrutiny.[1]

1.2 The Study of Transport and Trade in Medieval Wales

Welsh medieval trade, and to an even lesser extent the transportation system, have received some attention from geographers and historians. This was mainly in the first half of the twentieth century by scholars such as E.A. Lewis, O.S. Watkins and D.J. Davies.[2] Recent studies, beyond site specific investigations, are lacking. This project aims to provide the first detailed study of medieval trading places in south Wales during the post-Conquest period. It will seek to test the assertion that borough status was granted in order to give an artificial stimulus to trade by examining the evidence for boroughs and the comparative density of places holding weekly markets

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[1] Davies, R.R. (1978) *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales 1282 - 1400* and (1987) *Conquest, Coexistence and Change, Wales 1063 - 1415*; Walker, D. (1990) *Medieval Wales*; Carr, A.D. (1995) *Medieval Wales*; Griffiths, R.A. (ed.) (1978) *Boroughs of Medieval Wales* and (1994) *Conquerors and Conquered in Medieval Wales*

[2] Lewis, E.A. (1903) 'The Development of Industry and Commerce in Wales During the Middle Ages' *Trans. Royal Hist. Soc.*, new series xvii, 121-73; Watkins, O.S. (1915) 'The Medieval Market and Fair in England and Wales. ' *Y Cymmrodor* 25, 21-74; Davies, D.J. (1933) *The Economic History of South Wales Prior to 1800* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press)

within the region.[3] There is evidence for trading activity taking place away from the borough in the west Midlands of England, in locations such as at ports and country inns, but it has been long held that being economically 'backward' Wales needed an encouragement to stimulate trade which the borough provided.[4] This investigation will also consider the arteries of trade, the routeways that linked settlements, be they passages along the coast or inland routes by way of rivers, and, importantly, the medieval road system. The investigation has its origins in the author's earlier research into the landscape and economy of the medieval grange site of Cillonydd where the trackways proved to be interesting and distinctive topographical features.[5]

Traditionally students of Welsh medieval history have concentrated on the political machinations that took place, particularly in the post-Conquest period and have subsequently paid less attention to aspects of everyday life. This is largely due to the fact that the surviving documentation was usually produced for, or written about, those in positions of power and influence. Sources detailing the intrigues, alliances and power struggles are the more sensational contents of history and so have attracted the greater amount of attention. It is when historians come to consider mundane matters and the activities of people whose names perhaps we shall never know that it becomes apparent how little attention has been paid towards important aspects of everyday life, like transport and trade.

A study of markets and fairs in Wales by O.S. Watkins published in 1915 provides a very general overview of the Welsh situation and demonstrates the lack of

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[3] Made by C.C. Dyer, see Dyer, C.C. (1992) 'The Hidden Trade of the Middle Ages: Evidence from the west Midlands of England', *J. Hist. Geog.*, 18, 151

[4] *Ibid.*, 141 - 57

[5] The full report on the work at Cillonydd can be found in: Weeks, R. (2002) "A Post-Dissolution Monastic Site and its Landscape: Cillonydd on Mynydd Maen," *Gw. Loc. Hist.* 92, 3-24; interim reports have appeared in Weeks, R. (1998a) 'Cillonydd, Newbridge', *Arch. Wales* 38, 126 -128; Weeks, R. (1998d) 'Cillonydd Grange Landscape Study', *Med. Set. Res. Group Annual Report*, 13, 48 - 49

knowledge of medieval settlement archaeology at the time, and the general low opinion of medieval trade.[6] Much more interesting work comes from the same period by E.A. Lewis.[7] Although, overall, Lewis tends to promote the view expressed by Gerald of Wales who commented on how the Welsh 'pay no attention to commerce, shipping or industry' and 'do not live in towns or villages'.[8]

E.A. Lewis rightly recognised the changes that the Norman advance into Wales imposed on all aspects of life, with the building of castles, monasteries and planned towns and, in some places, villages. He describes how by 1300 a network of towns had come to prominence and emphasised their location on the coastal lowlands of Glamorgan and Pembrokeshire as being significant.[9] Lewis goes on to describe these places as being essentially military towns and yet also points out that they were visited by Flemish, French, English and occasionally Jewish travelling merchants.[10] The lack of commercial development in the towns, as far as Lewis was concerned, was the result of the inequality of privilege between the native Welsh and incoming settlers which acted as a deterrent to internal trade. A situation which, Lewis argues, was exacerbated by the lack of a central judicature to settle complaints.[11] However, the situation was often more complex than this, as Marcher lords made alliances with the native Welsh when it suited both parties to do so. As will be seen, the exclusion from trade did not last long into the study period and Welshmen were trading within

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[6] Watkins, O.S. (1915) 'The Medieval Market and Fair in England and Wales. ' *Y Cymmrodor* 25, 21-74

[7] Lewis, E.A. (1903) 'The Development of Industry and Commerce in Wales During the Middle Ages' *Trans. Royal Hist. Soc.*, new series xvii, 121-73

[8] Brewer, J.S., Dimock, J.F. and Warner, G.F. (eds.) *Gerald of Wales, Opera* (London, Rolls Series) vol. VI, 200, 180

[9] Lewis (1903), 129

[10] *Ibid.*, 129

[11] *Ibid.*, 173

'English' boroughs in the early thirteenth century, and doing so as burgesses. In some places they made up the majority of town dwellers, notably in Lampeter. Furthermore, the town of Aberafan in Glamorgan was founded early in the fourteenth century by a Welshman, Leisian ap Morgan Fychan, but based on the English model. The native Welsh were naturally unfamiliar with the Anglo-Norman way of doing business and this is represented in various court rolls. Lewis regards the Welsh way of doing business as *in patria*, literally 'in the country' rather than in a centralised market or fair in which they were expected to do business under the system of Norman hegemony.[12] It is likely that the Welsh way continued alongside the framework of the market provided there were still goods to be traded and whilst they were excluded from the new urban centres in the early twelfth century.

Lewis described labour in the Middle Ages as being, 'scarce, immobile and subject to occasional disruption'.[13] Whilst the latter point may certainly be true, the first two points are unlikely. R.A. Griffiths has demonstrated the high levels of mobility amongst inhabitants of the March of Wales[14] and any scarcity of labour may have been due to the immediate workforce being used in the existing construction programme. The bringing in of outside labourers would add to the overall degree of mobility. This was an issue highlighted by A.J. Taylor in his study of castles in north Wales. Taylor showed how craftsmen and materials from all over the British Isles were employed in order to support the Edwardian castle building programme there.[15]

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[12] *Ibid.*, 135

[13] *Ibid.*, 143

[14] Griffiths, R.A. (1994) "Medieval Severnside, the Welsh Connection" in Griffiths, R.A. (ed.) *Conquerors and Conquered in Medieval Wales* 1

[15] Taylor, A.J. (1974) *The King's Works in Wales 1277 - 1330* (London, HMSO) vi, fig. 25

Lewis noted that legal trade was not entirely in the hands of the local lord or the burgesses. He describes the chensers or *censarii*, a commercial class that often resided in provincial hamlets, paying a yearly tax for the faculty of buying and selling in the markets of commotes or hundreds. Lewis identified the *censarii* as being common in Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire and as having traded at fairs in large numbers in the towns of Pembroke and Tenby.[16] Chapter eight of this thesis discusses the evidence for burgesses and merchants, it reveals that the existence of *censarii* was far more widespread than Lewis suggested and they could more commonly be found residing in towns than provincial hamlets. Since the work of Lewis there has been no comprehensive study that has dealt specifically with medieval trade by way of markets and fairs in south Wales.

1.3 Studies of Medieval Trade in the Regions of England

The medieval economy is best understood on a regional basis.[17] To this end, several investigations have taken place into the role of the market in many parts of England, notably in Nottinghamshire,[18] Huntingdonshire,[19] Derbyshire,[20] Staffordshire,[21] Oxfordshire,[22] the Midlands[23] and the South West.[24] In the south

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[16] Lewis, E.A. (1903), 131

[17] Hatcher, J. (1969) 'A Diversified Economy: Later Medieval Cornwall', *Ec. Hist. Rev.* 2nd series, 208-27

[18] Unwin, P.T.H. (1981) "Rural Marketing in Medieval Nottinghamshire", *J. Hist. Geog.*, 7, 3, 231 - 251

[19] Masschaele, J. (1997) *Peasants, Merchants and Markets: Inland Trade in Medieval England 1150 - 1350*, (London, Macmillan)

[20] Coates, B. (1965) "The Origin and Distribution of Markets and Fairs in Medieval Derbyshire", *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 85, 92 - 111

[21] Palliser, D.M. & Pinnock, A.C. (1971) "The Markets of Medieval Staffordshire", *North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies*, 11, 49 - 63

[22] Postles, D. (1987) "Markets for Rural Produce in Oxfordshire, 1086 - 1350", *Midland History* 12, 14-26

[23] Dyer, C.C. (1992) 18, 141 - 57; Laughton, J. & Dyer, C (1999) "Small Towns in the East and West Midlands in the Later Middle Ages: A Comparison" *Midland History* 24, 26-7

west of England M. Kowaleski has considered the issue of the high density of boroughs to be found there and suggested that a poor transport system may have been one contributory factor.[25] In London, meanwhile, it has been found that political and administrative borders did not serve as economic boundaries as customary carrying services extended over wide areas.[26] Of these regional studies, it was P.T.H. Unwin who first subjected medieval market systems to detailed scrutiny, specifically with regard to the spatial and temporal distribution of markets.[27] The concepts of periodic marketing were considered, based on earlier research into the trading systems of Bihar in north eastern India.[28] Two models were considered: firstly the consumer model which states that geographical distances between trading places decreases due to consumer demand and trader model where the principle is that markets are held in neighbouring settlements on successive days so as to allow a merchant to complete a circuit of markets. Unwin concluded that for Nottinghamshire neither model could be strictly applied but it was noted that there were greater geographical distances between markets held on the same day.[29] He considered the range of goods being traded in order to determine whether a hierarchy of settlements existed. This was then compared to the distribution of markets and the implications for levels of mobility among the local population analysed; successful markets were those located on or

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[24] Kowaleski, M. (1995) *Local Markets and Regional Trade in Medieval Exeter*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press),

[25] *Ibid.* 76-77

[26] Campbell, B.M.S, Galloway, J.A., Keene, D. & Murphy, M. (1993) *A Medieval Capital and its Grain Supply, Agrarian Production in the London Region, c.1300* Historical Geography Research Series 30, 54-5

[27] Unwin, P.T.H. (1981) "Rural Marketing in Medieval Nottinghamshire", *J. Hist. Geog.*, 7, 3, 231 - 251

[28] Smith, R.H.T. (1979 & 1980) 'Periodic Market Places and Periodic Marketing: A Review and Prospect', *Progress in Human Geography*, 3, 471-505 and 4, 1-31

[29] Unwin (1981), 231

near the few main roads in the county which by the seventeenth century had developed the characteristics of modern urban centres.[30]

The identification of an hierarchy of settlements could be established in a number of ways; in an economic sense Unwin has looked at the range of goods being traded, but other factors could also be considered such as settlement size, form, wealth, estimated population and an ecclesiastical and military presence. T.R. Slater has studied the urban hierarchy of medieval Staffordshire using early fourteenth century Lay Subsidies. In this study, towns were ranked in order of assessed wealth and population. The study revealed that the wealthiest individuals lived in the larger towns and that those towns had a wider migration field than smaller boroughs as well as possessing greater occupational diversity and a concentration of specialised trades.[31]

C.C. Dyer has considered what he terms 'hidden trade' which refers to trade and exchange which took place outside the framework of boroughs, markets and fairs[32]. Dyer urges caution in using a legal institution as the sole basis for identifying trading places.[33] He states that every borough possessed a market, but in England many markets were held in places that had no borough status and that documentary sources were usually produced for lords and only show activity from which a lord benefited.[34] So many transactions would have gone unrecorded. Dyer goes on to identify a range of places where trade and exchange were likely to have taken place.

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[30] Unwin (1981), 238-43

[31] Slater, T.R. (1985) 'The Urban Hierarchy in Medieval Staffordshire', *J. Hist. Geog.*, 11, 2, 115 - 37

[32] Dyer, C.C. (1992); reprinted in Dyer (1994)

[33] Dyer (1994), 285

[34] *Ibid.* 287

Using examples from the west Midlands of England seven types of places were identified:

- Towns and potential towns lacking burgage tenure
- Trading places on marginal sites
- Trading places at administrative centres lacking borough status
- Suburban villages
- Country inns
- Ports and landing places
- Country fairs[35]

According to Dyer, a situation where no clearly discernible hierarchy of settlements is present represents what he terms a 'primitive' stage of urban development. This would be characterised by places where marketing was held at periodic venues and where the urban sector lacked development so as to feature a low proportion of town dwellers.[36]

1.4 South Wales 1100 - 1400

South Wales underwent substantial changes during the period of study as a direct result of the Norman conquest. Socially, economically and politically the character of life in medieval south Wales changed dramatically. These changes were represented in alterations to the landscape as the period saw the construction of complex fortifications and the creation of new planned towns and, in some places, villages. The Normans brought to south Wales the manorial system and demesne farming, although a not dissimilar Welsh practice, based on the concept of *tir bwrdd*, was already in operation.[37] The manorial system was intended to operate as a wider network of rural producers supporting a fledgling urban economy. Urban life offered

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[35] Dyer (1992), 211

[36] Dyer, C.C. (2000) "Trade, Urban Hinterlands and Market Integration, 1300-1600: a summing up" in Galloway, J.A. (ed.) *Trade, Urban Hinterlands and Market Integration 1300 - 1600*, 103

[37] Kissock, J.A. (1991c) "The Origins of Medieval Nucleated Settlement in Glamorgan: A Conjectural Model," *Morgannwg* 35, 39-40

many benefits to the Norman overlords. Towns served administrative and primarily commercial functions as well as allowing a greater degree of control to be exerted over those who lived in them. The Normans were noted for their commercial zeal and the town allowed the more efficient redistribution of goods and an element of influence on trading activity. Status was largely dependent upon wealth and the foundation of towns with borough status afforded the opportunity for the lord to play a key role in commercial life in order to exploit resources and to reap subsequent benefits.

There was no real urban structure in Wales prior to the coming of the Normans. The Roman *civitas* capitals at Caerwent and Carmarthen had ceased to serve as urban centres hundreds of years before. In France, the Normans had successfully imposed towns upon regions where previously no urban tradition had existed. These new centres had initially been formed to exert a strategic, political and military control which often gave way to primarily commercial functions. In time they began to exert control over their hinterlands and to exploit them commercially.[38] For example, the Norman borough of Caerleon, by 1314, was worth just over £25 to its lord, however it was not yielding as much profit as its hinterland which brought in almost twice as much revenue for its lord totalling £48 14*s.* 3½ *d.*[39] Later in the fourteenth century the inquisition of Edward le Despenser in 1376 records the town of Caerphilly as being worth £13 2*s.* 1*d.* to him, whilst its hinterland - Senghenydd - was much more valuable returning a handsome profit of £122 3*s.* 10*d* to the Despenser coffers.[40]

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[38] Rowley, T. (1999) *The Normans*, (Stroud, Tempus) 96; see also Bates, D. (1982) *Normandy before 1066* chapter three

[39] *Calendar of Close Rolls* (hereafter: *Cal. Clo. Roll.*) 1314 132

[40] *Cal. Clo. Roll*, 1374-77, 306; NLW: Bute MS 37/10; for landholding here after 1400 see NLW: Plymouth 50/412

Following the conquest and rapid consolidation of England, that took place after 1066, William was faced with the challenge of Wales. He set about solving the problem of his troublesome western border by granting his close associates the right to seize what land they could and allowed them to create new lordships from it. These new lordships were similar to those that had been established in Normandy and Brittany, as well as England, with one vitally important difference: 'the king's writ did not run,' by this measure the lords of the March held a level of power within their newly conquered lands comparable with that of the king. English common law did not apply in the March, but statute law did, and despite their newly won freedoms the lords still ultimately owed their allegiance to the king. Moreover, the creation of the Marches was, as Dyer has recently put it, an exercise in 'private enterprise' as powerful Norman families including the fitz Osberns and the Lacys crossed the border into south Wales with the intent of carving out new territory.[41] In the following centuries, the Crown continued to have a physical presence in south Wales as the king himself often acted as a Marcher lord when certain lordships were in the hands of the Crown. The extent of Norman control in south Wales in 1100 is illustrated in map 1.1.

The Norman Conquest of Wales proved to be a piecemeal and protracted affair. This was the result of a combination of factors, not least the decentralised power structure of the native Welsh dynasties.[42] The key to the Norman advance into Wales, just as it had been throughout Europe, was the castle, at its most basic consisting of the earthwork motte and bailey and to a lesser extent a ringwork.[43] Not one ringwork castle in the whole of Wales is known to date before 1100, though there may have been as many as eleven mottes in south Wales by that time.[44] By the

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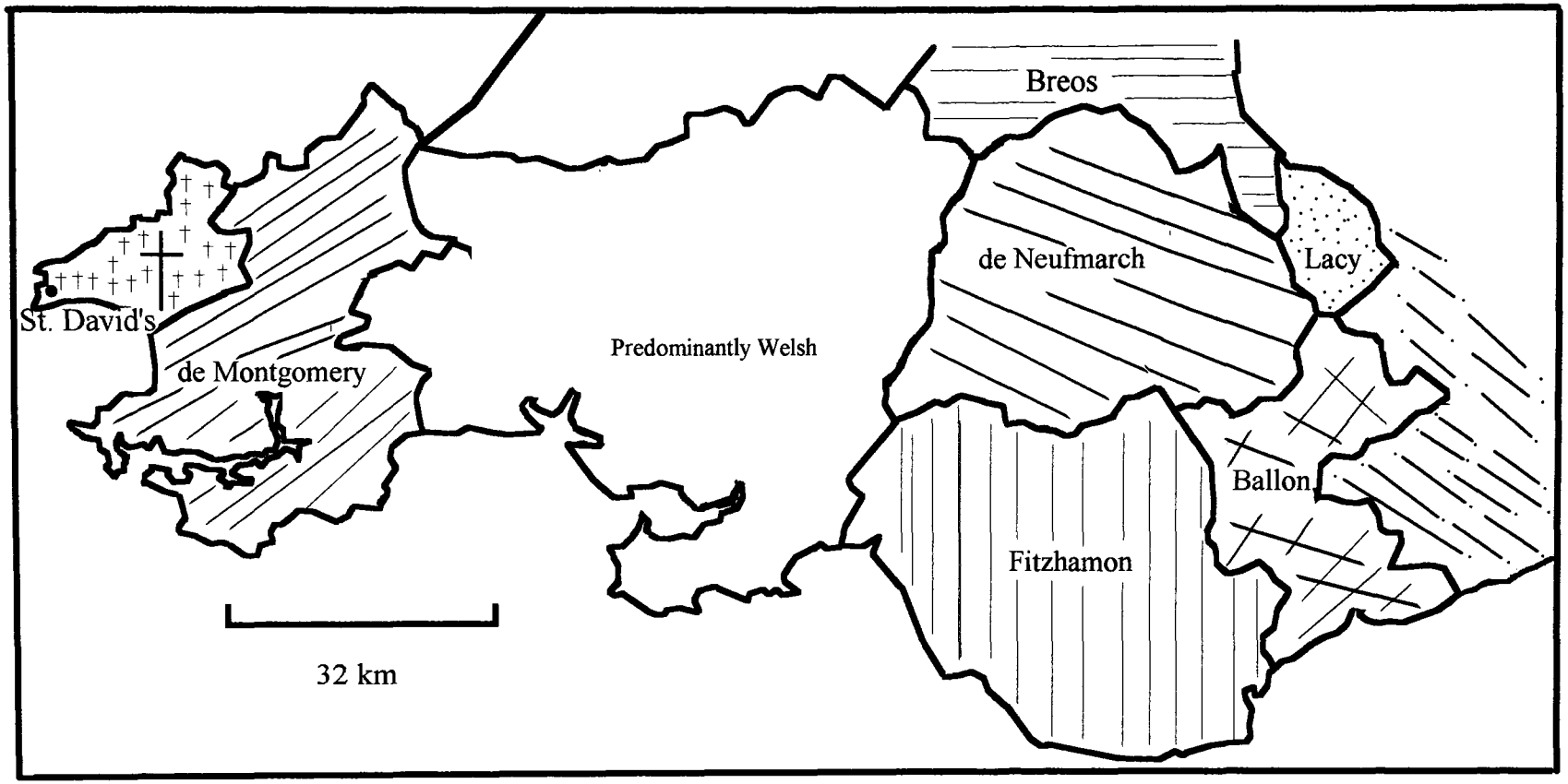
[41] Dyer, C.C. (2002) *Making a Living in the Middle Ages: The People of Britain 850 - 1520* (New Haven, Yale University Press) 83

[42] Davies, J. (1996) *The Making of Wales* (Cardiff, Cadw 36)

[43] Rowley, T. (1999), 88

[44] Spurgeon, C.J. (1987) "Mottes and castle-ringworks in Wales," in Kenyon, J.R. & Avent, R., 21-45



Map 1.1: South Wales c.1100 (After William Rees)

thirteenth century there were more than one hundred earthwork mottes in south Wales.[45] Earthwork castles were established in abundance, yet more widely known are the complex stone built fortifications of the thirteenth century, including the formidable fortress of Caerphilly. The castle building programme would have required the utilisation of extensive resources and required the movement of a range of goods, materials and people, impacting extensively on the regional economy. Unfortunately this process is poorly documented in south Wales with nothing like the rich vein of sources which survive for the construction of the Edwardian castles of north Wales.[46]

The dislocation of the native Welsh population was not an easy process for the conquerors and allowing Welsh rulers to remain in control of much of Wales was the result of expediency, due to the disproportionate amount of money and resources that would have been required in order to subdue the land. In effect the conquest of Wales was given over to the barons in return for extensive privileges over the lands that they conquered. This meant that by the twelfth century two distinct zones had emerged, the March of Wales (*Marchia Wallia*) and the Principality (*Pura Wallia*), the latter being the domain of the Prince of Wales and the former that of the Anglo-Norman 'Marcher' or 'frontier' lords. The extent of the March of south Wales, as it eventually looked, and the lordships that constituted it, is outlined in map 1.2.

The Norman lords maintained, in the words of R.R. Davies, 'the ability to sustain a . . . large and socially-differentiated population.'[47] Attempts to do this in

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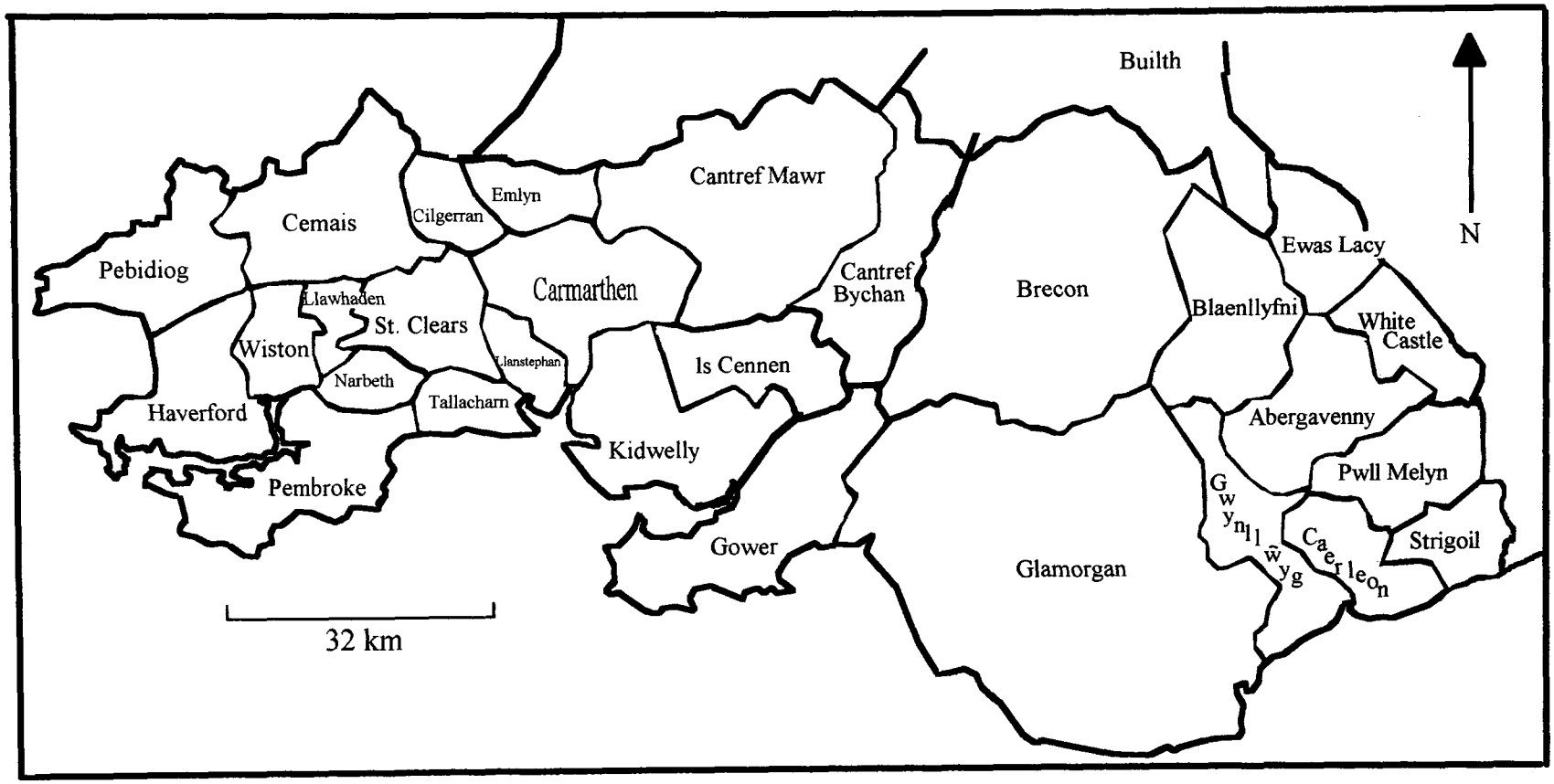
[45] McNeil, T.E. & Pringle, M. (1997) "A Map of Mottes in the British Isles" *Med. Arch.* 41, 220-223

[46] For a discussion, see Taylor, A.J. (1974) *The King's Works in Wales 1277 - 1330* (London, HMSO); see also Kenyon, J.R. & Avent, R. (eds.) (1987) *Castles in Wales and the Marches: Essays in Honour of D.J. Cathcart King* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press)

[47] Davies, R.R. (1990) *Domination and Conquest: The Experience of Ireland, Scotland and Wales 1100 - 1300* (Cambridge, University Press), 10



Map 1.2: The Marcher lordships of south Wales (After William Rees)

south Wales are evident from around about 1100 onwards when planned settlements began to appear with settlers from other countries brought in to live in them. In south west Wales this process is comparatively well documented, here Henry I took a direct interest in the introduction of Flemish settlers into Pembrokeshire.[48] The period also witnessed the introduction of Latin monasticism into south Wales. The Cistercian Order in particular stand out as great 'changers of the south Wales landscape.'[49] Their rule required them to settle and work in remote and often inhospitable places. It is as sheep farmers, operating a system of granges at the head of which stood the mother house or Abbey, that their impact both on the landscape and the Welsh economy was greatest. Other orders were also present such as the Benedictines and the Franciscans and the evidence for their influence on commercial activity will be examined in this thesis.

There is little evidence of a moneyed economy operating in Wales prior to the arrival of the Normans,[50] although knowledge of the native Welsh economy in general is limited and often dismissed as simply existing at a subsistence level.[51] Nonetheless meat, wool and dairy products from Welsh producers would have been of interest to travelling merchants who would have brought in a range of luxury goods such as wine and silks. Using evidence from the Pipe Rolls, D. Farmer has shown how in the thirteenth century cattle reared on Welsh estates were being sold at, and were important to, markets in the Midlands and the south east of England.[52]

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[48] Kissock, J.A. (1997) "'God Made Nature and Men Made Towns': Post-Conquest and Pre-Conquest Villages in Pembrokeshire", in Edwards, N. (ed.) *Landscape and Settlement in Medieval Wales*, (Oxford, Oxbow), 123 - 137

[49] H.C. Darby in Williams, D.H. (ed.) (1990) *Atlas of Cistercian lands in Wales*, xi

[50] Dolley, R.H.M. (1962) "The 1962 Llantrithyd Treasure Trove and some thoughts on the First Norman Coinage in Wales", *The British Numismatic Journal* 26, 74 - 76; A hoard of Saxon coins found recently near Abergavenny is the first significant early medieval coin hoard found in south Wales.

[51] See Davies, J. (1996) *The Making of Wales*, 36-55

[52] Farmer, D.L. (1991) "Marketing the Produce of the Countryside, 1200-1500" in Miller, E. (ed.) *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, III:1348-1500*, 378-80

Surviving accounts from Breconshire support the view that cattle reared on south Wales estates and other commodities were produced specifically for sale at English markets. An export trade existed in cheese and wool as well as cattle.[53] Gerald of Wales commented on how the Welsh were receiving foreign imports which does suggest that a tradition of external trade existed.[54] How far back this seemingly buoyant trade with the wider world can be taken is uncertain. The pre-Conquest administrative system is unclear. In south Wales it may have been some form of multiple estate with a *llys* or court at its head and some examples have been identified.[55] The early medieval Welsh laws refer to a traditional system of land organisation, consisting of the smallest unit being a *tref* which was not unlike an English vill or township, and of the *commote* which was made up of fifty *trefi* and was not dissimilar to the English hundred. It is assumed that these commotes were paired in order to form a *cantref* or a network of 100 rural townships or *trefi*. The law books state that each commote would comprise of twelve larger estates, or *maenol*, which consisted of four *trefi* which leaves two 'spare' *trefi* in each commote which would be set aside for the ruler.[56] The extent to which this is an idealised model and to which the Welsh laws apply to south Wales is uncertain, some indication may lie in the fact that the Norman town of Monmouth appears to have been retained within a Welsh administrative unit, as was Trecastle in the commote of Llywel.[57] Over the last twenty years it has been argued that there is some evidence to suggest that Roman

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[53] PRO: SC6/1218/6, 7, 9

[54] Kightly, C. (1988) *A Mirror of Medieval Wales*, (Cardiff, Cadw), 94

[55] Kissock, J.A. (1991c) 36-41; and (2001) "The Upland Dimension: Further Conjectures on Medieval Settlement in Gower," *Morgannwg* 46, 55-68

[56] Wade Evans, A.W. (1909) *Welsh Medieval Law, being a text of the laws of Howel the Good namely the British Museum Harleian MS 4353 of the thirteenth century with translation* (hereafter *Welsh Medieval Law*) 16-33; see also, Davies, W. (1996) *Wales in the Early Middle Ages*, (Leicester, University Press) 43

[57] Other examples may be Cowbridge within Llanblethian and Llanelli in Carnewalthan

estate structures survived in south Wales, possibly until as late as the eighth century when they began to fragment.[58] This hypothesis remains contentious due to the paucity of evidence for such a long period. Subsequent reorganisation of the landscape, firstly by the Marcher lords and then by the clergy, during the late eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries mean that detecting earlier estate structures, particularly in light of the absence of any detailed documentary evidence is a difficult task.

1.5 The Present Study

In preparing this study Maurice Beresford's book, *New Towns of the Middle Ages* has been a frequently cited source, with questions posed within its pages providing the rationale for this investigation. A scholar researching transport and trade in English regions may be surprised that Beresford's study, first published in 1967, is one of the main secondary sources referred to in these pages. The same scholar may be even more surprised to learn that questions posed by Beresford more than thirty years ago are only now being addressed in a detailed study.[59] In the Midland counties of England, for example, great strides have been made in advancing Beresford's work there on the number of boroughs and their proportional densities.[60] This is not to detract from the importance of Beresford's work as he laid the foundation upon which to build. Regrettably, progress along the same lines within Wales has not been as substantial and Beresford's study and the questions he posed remain as important today as when his work was first published. There are, of course, specific sites which have been subject to more detailed consideration than was afforded to them by Beresford, but a comprehensive synthesis that supplants

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[58] Davies, W. (1978) *An Early Welsh Microcosm* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press) 624, see also Dark, K.R. (1994b) *Civitas to Kingdom, British Political Continuity 300 - 800*

[59] Beresford's questions are outlined below, see pages 26-8

[60] Laughton, J. & Dyer, C (1999) 26-7

Beresford's work has not been undertaken. The present study does not lay claim to supplanting Beresford's work, nor is it exclusively interested in identifying boroughs: instead it seeks to provide a detailed consideration of some of the themes and issues raised by Beresford, specifically those relating to transport and trade.

A second major secondary source that is of interest is the survey of Welsh medieval 'towns' provided by Ian Soulsby.[61] Soulsby's study, the result of research undertaken by the Welsh Urban Archaeological Research Unit in the mid-1970s, is a useful supplement to Beresford's work and, like Beresford, provides a gazetteer of sites. Soulsby's gazetteer is more detailed than Beresford's and provides a good starting point for more detailed investigation of specific places. Unfortunately, there are problems with some of the individual entries contained within it; for example, Soulsby appears to have confused the entries of Laugharne and Loughor, giving some of the same information in two separate entries.[62] The correct information for these locations in terms of both markets and fairs is included within this study, and the correct sources cited. It appears that Soulsby's error occurred as the result of a mis-reading, and subsequently confusing, of *Tallwchwr* (Loughor) with *Tallacharn* (Laugharne). Dyer, meanwhile, has rejected twenty six of Soulsby's one hundred and five 'towns' as being little more than villages.[63] The problem, of course, is that any given settlement may go through periods of expansion and contraction and so a prominent town in the thirteenth century may have declined dramatically by the end of the fourteenth century. This issue will be discussed more fully in chapter three of this thesis. Aside from the work of Beresford and Soulsby, more detailed investigation into a selection of specific boroughs across Wales has been provided in a collection of

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[61] Soulsby, I. (1983) *The Towns of Medieval Wales*, (Chichester, Phillimore)

[62] *Ibid.* 158, 179

[63] Dyer, C. (2000) "Small Towns 1270-1540" in Palliser, D.M. (ed.) *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain volume 1, 600 - 1540*, 508

essays edited by R.A. Griffiths.[64] More recently archaeological excavation has shed new light on specific medieval trading centres, notably, Trelech, Monmouth, Newport (Pembs.) and Kenfig.[65] Despite the evidence for economic growth having been considered in these investigations, the role of markets and the transport system that served them has not been a major research priority.

Unfortunately, Soulsby did not heed Beresford's challenge to provide answers to a set of questions related to transport and trade in Wales. This means that there remains tremendous scope for an up-to-date study of transport and trade which encapsulates all of the available information, both documentary and archaeological. However, if the scope is as great as it appears, it must be pondered why such a study has not been undertaken before. The answer to this question lies in the problems presented by the documentary evidence, and the general lack of detailed information for long periods of time.

1.6 Documentary Source Material

Just as a fellow researcher working in England may find it surprising the Beresford's study remains the major source, another issue which they may not fully appreciate is the problems presented by the limited documentary evidence. In conversation with a colleague whilst undertaking research for this project the author was asked why he didn't simply examine the borough charter for one location that we were discussing. Certainly this would have been done had such a charter survived. Many medieval documents relating to south Wales were held locally rather than stored centrally in London. Consequently, the rate of survival has been low and the

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[64] Griffiths, R.A. (ed.) (1978) *Boroughs of Medieval Wales*,

[65] Howell, R. (2000b) "Development by Design - An Investigation of Thirteenth Century Industrialisation and Urban Growth at Trelech, Gwent." *Stud. Celt.* 34, 211-22; Robbins, T. (1997) "Kenfig, Castle Environs", *Arch. Wales* 37, 81 - 84; Jackson, R. & Jackson, P. (1991) "Recent Archaeological Work in Monmouth", *Arch. Wales* 31, 7-9

state of preservation poor. It is rare that contemporary accounts of documents having been destroyed in the Middle Ages survive, but it is not unknown. An example from Glamorgan gives some indication of the volume of documentation that was lost when in 1321 Llewelyn Bren combined with the de Bohuns and Mortimers in an attempt to overthrow the Despenser lords of Glamorgan. Ultimately this attempt proved unsuccessful but resulted in widespread destruction. Hugh le Despenser petitioned the king as to the damage that had been caused by the 'treasonable earls'. In south Wales this included: the loss of documents, specifically listed as charters, remembrances and muniments the value of which was estimated at £2000. This figure is quite substantial, especially when the same sum, £2000, is quoted as the cost of damage to ten castles that were either destroyed or damaged. Among them were some notable fortifications, including Newport, Cardiff and Caerphilly castles. Additionally, records of rents, debts, farms and other customs were also said to be lost to a value put at £4000.[66] Therefore, the loss of documents was valued at three times greater than the cost of damage to castles, representing a quite considerable amount of destruction.

There were also difficulties in getting officials to keep records, especially during the crisis periods associated with the famine and agricultural distress of 1315-22 and outbreaks of the plague from the 1340s onwards. Several ministers' accounts refer to rents going uncollected in 1316 because no one was available to take office.[67] At Builth, land was being farmed at the time of one of the most serious outbreaks of the Black Death in 1348.[68] There then follows a considerable break with

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[66] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1322, 541-44 and PRO: C133/73; C135/2/18; C145/83/1

[67] PRO: SC6/1219/1; PRO: SC6/1220/3 an account for Carmarthen from 1316 records that £16 worth of rents went uncollected because there was no one to take office. As late as 1370 lands were being left uncultivated because no one wished to farm them, see PRO: SC6/1158/3; for background see Rees, W. (1920) "The Black Death in Wales," *Trans. Royal Hist. Soc.* 4, 3, 115-35

[68] PRO: SC6/1156/6

adequate accounts not being compiled again until 1361.[69] Even in instances where there were officials in place, the effects of famine, disease and warfare in the fourteenth century could mean that there was little for them to report. In the fourteenth century Llanlo in Carmarthenshire could usually have been expected to return £2 0*s.* 4*d.* annually to its lord but in 1350 all the tenants bar one had died from the plague so the land had been left uncultivated that year and the income lost.[70]

Some records of national government exist in published format. Patent Rolls, Close Rolls, Fine Rolls and more are available as calendared accounts. Many contain references to trade in south Wales and so were utilised in this study. The division of land into Marcher lordships meant that for the most part the lands of south Wales were exempt from royal taxation and the jurisdiction of the royal courts. The Marcher lordships rarely appear in Crown records. It was only upon the death of the tenant in chief, when lands would sometimes revert to the Crown, that there would be an increase in the volume of documents issued by the Chancery and the Exchequer. It is these periods that are the most illuminating in terms of documentary material. Upon the death of Gilbert de Clare in 1314, Bartholomew de Baddlesmere was appointed keeper of what were now directly the King's lands in south Wales.[71] De Baddlesmere oversaw the compilation of some significant documentation, which, for the historical geographer provides useful information on settlement and society at the time. Under the system of feudalism, de Clare had been tenant in chief but with no male heir his lands reverted to the Crown, writs would then have been issued by Chancery to the regional escheator, in this case de Baddlesmere, who then commissioned surveys of the holdings in the Clare lordships. The inquisitions describe the extent of Clare

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[69] PRO: SC6/1156/7

[70] PRO: SC6/1306/1; there are numerous references to vacant tenements there for the next ten years, see also PRO: SC6/1159/1

[71] *Calendar of Patent Rolls* (hereafter: *Cal. Pat. Roll.*) Ed II, 370 -1

holdings in both England and Wales and provides information on incomes to the lord from markets, tolls and rents, as well as details of the number of burgages, number of mills and other items that the de Clare family and ultimately the King would be profiting from.[72] An extant ministers' account for Glamorgan from this period contains information on towns in the de Clare lordships of Glamorgan and Morgannwg,[73] and an extent commissioned during this period provides a third substantive source.[74] The three documents, appear to provide most of the illumination for this period, which in turn reflects the poor rate of survival of documentary evidence. It also reveals how there was a greater survival rate and indeed, possibly a greater production of administrative documents during the periods that lordships in south Wales were held by the Crown.

Undoubtedly more documents would originally have existed for the Marcher lordships. It seems that the lack of a centralised judicature in south Wales created a situation whereby the rate of survival of documents for the Principality of Wales, especially once it came under the control of the Crown, was much greater than that of the March of Wales, even though the March was subject to Anglo-Norman administration from a much earlier date. From the thirteenth century letters sent out by Chancery, such as the letters patent and the letters close, become particularly important sources, as well as rolls of charters which have been calendared. Later the de Clare holdings in south Wales were passed from the Crown to the Despensers. It is interesting to note that the next extant detailed survey of the whole of Glamorgan dates from sixty years later, with the inquisition of Edward Despenser in 1376.[75] In

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[72] Bartley, K. (1996) "Mapping the Inquisitiones Post Mortem", *Med. Set. Res. Group Annual Report*, 11, 30 - 33 illustrates the extent and distribution of de Clare holdings

[73] PRO: SC6/1202/6

[74] PRO: E/142/88/1,2,3,4,5,6,7

[75] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1374-77, 306

the case of the lordship of Gower only two surveys survive from the whole of the Middle Ages; a ministers' account from 1399/1400 and a chief forester's account from 1337/1338 that was transferred to the seat of the lords of Arundel at Arundel castle, where it remains preserved to this day.[76]

Other documents do indeed exist, notably from the manorial courts in the form of ministers' accounts, which exist for many manors, towns and boroughs during the period of Marcher lordship. References for these and repositories that hold them are listed on the manorial documents register for Wales which is held by the Historic Manuscripts Commission (HMC).[77] Unfortunately some of these extant manuscripts are badly faded and in a poor state of preservation and yet it is often the case that some of these documents provide the only source of evidence for a particular place during the Middle Ages.[78] Most of the surviving documents do, however, tend only to record the activities from which the local lord profited and as such can only provide limited, often one sided, information regarding the vibrancy of commercial activity, and of everyday life in general. Such documents may be selective, inaccurate or suffer from bias in terms of the information that they contain. Records could well have suffered from evasion and, in terms of usefulness to the present investigation, a particular document may only contain snippets of information, and yet extracting a small piece of information from a larger document carries with it the danger that the information concerned will be taken out of context without an appreciation of the actual situation which the whole document represents.

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[76] PRO: SC6/1202/15; Arundel Castle MS. W1m.3, 4, 5

[77] http://www.hmc.gov.uk/MDR

[78] As is the case with the fragment of a ministers' account for the manor of Bayvil, Pembrokeshire held by Nottingham University, see Nottingham University Manuscript Collection: M16/173/250

The role of the lord and the rights of the tenants within the lordship are a common feature of borough charters issued to towns. Some of these have survived and those that do are a useful quarry when considering the role of the lord and the activities of the burgesses, this has meant that where evidence has survived, charters have provided an important source. Three volumes of *British Borough Charters*[79] have been published, covering a range of towns and some of the rights they possessed, more detailed evidence for specific towns is also available in published form.[80]

The main medieval Welsh sources for the period are the *Annals Cambriae*[81] and the *Brut y Tywysogion* or Chronicle of Princes[82], both of which are believed to have originated in monastic houses. The *Brut* seems to have been based on earlier sources including the *Annals.* Published versions of both have appeared transcribed and translated by T. Jones. Of the *Annals*, Jones has published the fourth version known as the *Cronica de Wallia* which covers the years 1190-1254 and 1266-85.[83] The *Brut y Tywysogion* exists in three forms and all three have been published with a translation. The first version runs to 1282 and is known as the Peniarth MS version[84], whereas the Red Book of Hergest version MS continues to 1332[85]. The third version is the *Brenhinedd y Saeson* which combines much of the original *Brut* manuscript

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[79] Ballard, A. (ed.) (1913), *British Borough Charters 1042 - 1216,* Ballard A. & Tait, J. (eds.) (1923) *British Borough Charters 1216 - 1307,* Weinbaum M. (ed.) *British Borough Charters 1307 - 1600,* (1943) (Cambridge, University Press)

[80] Notably in the *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*

[81] Williams ap Ithel, J. (ed.) (1860) *Annales Cambriae*, (London, Rolls Series)

[82] Jones T. (ed.) (1952) *Brut y Tywysogion: Penarth MS. 20 Version*, (Cardiff, Board of Celtic Studies)

[83] Jones, T. (ed.) (1946-48) "Chronica de Wallia," *Bull. Board. Celt. Stud.* 12, 27-44

[84] Jones, T. (ed.) *op. cit.* (1952)

[85] Jones, T. (ed.) (1955) *Brut y Tywysogion: Red Book of Hergest Version,* (Cardiff, Board of Celtic Studies)

with some English annals.[86] Other sources largely pre-date the study period, but some do run into the period. Indeed, Wendy Davies has added greatly to knowledge of early medieval Wales with her studies of the Llandaff charters.[87]

One notable contemporary source is Gerald of Wales (*c.*1146 - 1223). Born at Manorbier Castle in Pembrokeshire to a Welsh mother and Norman father, Gerald was a well educated member of the clergy who moved in prominent circles and wrote and travelled extensively. In 1188 he accompanied Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury on a tour through Wales. His *Itinerarium Cambriae*[88] (the Journey Through Wales) and the *Descriptio Cambriae* (the Description of Wales)[89] contain observations, historical information and anecdotes and as such form a valuable source of information about life in medieval Wales.

On first impressions it seems that the calendared accounts of Patent Rolls, Close Rolls and others contain little with reference to Wales when compared to the size of the volumes that they are contained in, and yet what information is displayed tends to be of interest and use in the investigation which makes the pursuit of these sources worthwhile. This evidence forms one of the few substantive sources for south Wales during the study period, despite the fact that for long periods south Wales remained outside of the English administrative system.

The Inquisitions *Post-Mortem,* Close Rolls, Charter Rolls and Patent Rolls were all considered during this investigation. Printed accounts relevant to the study

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[86] Jones, T. (ed.) (1971) *Brenhinedd y Saeson*, (Cardiff, University of Wales Press)

[87] Davies, W. (1978) *An Early Welsh Microcosm: Studies in the Llandaff charters*; *Idem.* (1979) *The Llandaff Charters*

[88] Williams, W. (ed) *Giraldus Cambrensis: Itinerary Through Wales* (London, Longman)

[89] Williams, W. (ed) *Giraldus Cambrensis: Descriptio Cambriae* (London, Rolls series)

area can be found in *Cardiff Records,*[90] *Cartae et alia et munimenta de Glamorgan pertinent*[91], *Brecon Cartularium*[92], and, as mentioned earlier, the volumes of *British Borough Charters.*[93]

Ministers' accounts also form an important source.[94] These were studied along with inquisitions *post-mortem*, and together they form the two unpublished sources most heavily relied upon in this study. Ministers' accounts, as is often the case with official documents, show a very one sided view (that of the lord) and more sales are recorded than purchases. Some ministers' accounts exist in published form, notably a selection of accounts for Neath translated by Tony Hopkins.[95] The work of William Rees is essential for anyone studying the early history of Wales and his *South Wales and the March a Social and Agrarian History*, based on his D.Sc. (Econ). thesis, is a valuable source which contains extracts from primary sources.[96] The work of scholars such as William Rees, Tony Hopkins, G.T. Clark, T. Jones, J.G. Edwards, W.de Gray Birch and G.G. Francis among others have added greatly to the resource of published primary source material for the student of south Wales in the Middle Ages.[97] The most comprehensive review of the available sources has been published by R. Ian Jack.[98]

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[90] Mathews, J.H. (ed.) (1898 - 1911) *Cardiff Records,* 6 vols. (Cardiff, Cardiff Corporation)

[91] Clark G.T. & Clark, G.L. (eds.) (1885-1910) *Cartae et Alia Munimenta quae ad Dominium de Glamorgan Pertinent,* 6 vols. (Cardiff, William Lewis)

[92] Rees, W. (ed). (1923-5) "Charters of the Boroughs of Brecon and Llandovery," *Bull. Board. Celt. Stud.* II

[93] Ballard & Tait (eds.), Weimbaum (ed.) *op. cit.*

[94] For a discussion see Latham, R.E. (1952-4) "Ministers' Accounts" *Amateur Historian* I, 113

[95] Hopkins A. (ed.) (1988) *Medieval Neath: Ministers Accounts 1262-1316,* (Pontypool, Nidum)

[96] Rees, W. (1924) *South Wales and the March 1284-1415 : A Social and Agrarian History* (Oxford, University Press)

[97] Full details on work by these scholars is provided in the bibliography

[98] Griffiths, R.A. (2000) "Wales and the Marches", in Palliser, D.M. (ed.) *The Cambridge Urban*

Whilst this research project was taking place the first volume of the *Cambridge Urban History of Britain* was published. This is an important work and the sections dealing with Wales and the Marches, written mainly by R.A. Griffiths, highlight the difficulties presented by the lack of useful source material. The Welsh sections of this considerable study are frequently reliant on the published works of Soulsby, Beresford, Lewis, Griffiths and William Rees. When dealing with 'port towns' it is interesting to note that, whilst Scotland merits a separate chapter, Wales is included in the section dealing with England. Kowaleski's survey of port towns relies on four main sources for evidence from Wales. These are: contributions from the edited volume on Welsh boroughs by Griffiths, the paper by O.S. Watkins on markets and fairs, the work of E.A. Lewis and a study of Anglesey by A.D. Carr.[99] This situation is not so much a reflection on the authors and publishers of the volume, rather it highlights the limited amount of published information that is available to work with from Wales. This situation reflects the general lack of research, which in turn is partly due to the obstacles presented by a comparatively poor reserve of primary source material. Problems of limited documentation should not, however, prevent such a study from ever being undertaken and to this end the research presented here is an attempt to redress the balance, by providing the first detailed study of transport and trade in south Wales during the post-Conquest period, using the available source material.

1.7 Beresford's Questions Relating to Transport and Trade in South Wales

In his study, Professor Beresford proposed a series of questions that he urged Welsh researchers to consider.[100] Prior to this study it seems that no effort has been

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History of Britain volume 1, 600 - 1540, 681 - 715; Jack, R.I. (1972) *Medieval Wales, The Sources of History* (London, Hodder & Stoughton)

[99] Kowaleski, M. (2000) "Port Towns: England and Wales 1300 - 1540" in Palliser, D.M. (ed.) *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain volume 1, 600 - 1540*, 467-94 citing Carr, A.D. (1982) *Medieval Anglesey* (Llangefni, Anglesey Antiquarian Society)

[100] Beresford, M.W. (1988) *New Towns of the Middle Ages, Town Plantation in England, Wales and*

made to attempt to provide answers to them. Consequently, it was decided that the present research would undertake such an investigation. In doing this, the thesis would provide a detailed regional study of a somewhat neglected aspect of Welsh medieval history. It would also complement other investigations that have taken place in numerous English regions. Beresford's questions were aimed at Wales in general, regrettably the time constraints imposed on this project meant that a detailed study of the whole of Wales was impracticable. Thus, the present study relates Beresford's questions to south Wales. Specifically, Beresford asked:

(i) Was the proliferation of market towns in Wales a consequence of inefficient transport?

In order to answer this question the number of market places in the region first has to be identified. Each individual market then has to be considered in terms of its location and proximity to neighbouring markets and lordship boundaries. In the following pages, chapters two and three discuss where markets were being held and consider the evidence for trading systems based around periodic markets. Aside from providing information to answer the first of Beresford's questions, these two chapters provide the first comprehensive survey of medieval markets and fairs held in south Wales during the Middle Ages.

(ii) Did the poor quality of inland transport slow down the movement of traffic?

To answer this question, chapter four builds on the evidence presented in chapters two and three by examining the evidence for the road system that linked the market places. Evidence for the medieval road system and evidence from those who used it will be considered in this chapter. A map showing the most likely medieval routes will be presented, which will be accompanied by a gazetteer of the principal

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Gascony, first published 1967, (Gloucester, Alan Sutton), 347

routeways between market settlements.[101] Accounts from travellers such as Gerald of Wales will also be used, as well as interpretations of the accounts of land surveyors and other sources. The nature of the terrain will also be considered in the attempt to answer this question.

(iii) Did it also shorten the journey that countrymen were able to make to market?

and

(iv) Did a host of small trading centres exist due to the negative effect of high transport costs?

Both of these questions are related to the information provided in chapters two, three and four and so will be considered in these sections. Chapters six and seven which consider the influence of the monastic orders and of burgesses and travelling merchants respectively are also relevant in answering these two questions. It is essential that these two important groups in society are investigated in a study of transport and trade due to the significant role they played in trading activity. Chapter eight is also important in this respect, it examines the evidence for the types of goods, materials and natural resources that were being traded and used. Therefore, whilst these chapters may not directly address Beresford's questions, they provide important information to help answer them and the subjects they deal with cannot be ignored in a study of transport and trade.

(v) Did the poor quality of local transport and the difficulties of navigation along the coast prevent any single port from dominating the trade of the region?

Building on the information provided in the previous chapters, chapter five will provide information that will answer this question. It will consider the location of navigable rivers, and attempt to discover the extent to which they were actually being used.

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[101] See Appendix one

1.8 Conclusion

Overall, this thesis can be divided into three key themes in its attempt to provide answers to these questions. These are considerations of the respective roles of the main 'players' on the transport and trading scene including the Marcher lords, the Crown, the monastic orders, burgesses and travelling merchants. Secondly, it will look at the 'places' at which trade was taking place in terms of weekly markets and annual fairs, and thirdly it will consider the 'process' in terms of the routes that were used to link trading places. The structure of the thesis is as follows: this introductory chapter has so far outlined some of the background to the investigation and discussed the approach taken. Subsequently, chapters two and three will consider two of the key 'players' alongside the 'places' that trade took place. Chapter two will investigate the role of the Marcher lords and the king in south east Wales and chapter three their respective influence in south west Wales (see Map 1.2). The decision to include the influence of the Crown alongside the role of the Marcher lords is due to the fact that the king, in south Wales, was to all intents and purposes also a Marcher lord; albeit, as Farmer puts it, a 'unique' one.[102] Chapters four and five are devoted to the 'process' of transport by way of roads, rivers and navigation along the coast. Chapter six will discuss the presence and influence of the third main 'player', the monastic orders. Chapter seven will consider evidence for the type of goods, materials and natural resources that were being traded and chapter eight will discuss the burgesses and merchants - 'players' in their own right - who traded in them. A concluding chapter will set out answers to Beresford's questions based on the findings presented in the earlier chapters. It will also discuss possibilities for future work and highlight how the evidence presented in this thesis compares to existing knowledge and with other research recently completed.

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[102] Farmer, D.L. (1991) "Marketing the Produce of the Countryside, 1200 - 1500" in Miller, E. (ed.) *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, III:1348-1500,* 333

Chapter Two

The Role and Influence of Lordship on Transport and Trade

(I) South East Wales

2.1 Introduction

The influence of the Marcher lords on transport and trading activity was undoubtedly considerable. The lords provided the impetus for the establishment of new towns with their burgage tenure and formal markets and fairs. This chapter, the first of two dealing with the role of lordship, will examine the nature and extent of the influence on transport and trade held by the Marcher lords of south east Wales. It will consider the lordships contained within a spatially defined area consisting of the 'old' counties of Breconshire, Gwent and Glamorgan. This chapter, along with the following chapter, provides information in order to answer the first of Beresford's questions, by finding out exactly where markets were being held in south east Wales during the Middle Ages. This information will also contribute to answering Beresford's fourth question which pondered whether a host of small trading settlements existed due to the negative effects of high transport costs.

The influence of the lord on transport and trade is potentially the most interesting when compared to the role of individual merchants and producers, not least because any one lord may have held several lordships in a range of geographical locations. One example comes from accounts dating from 1368, when fresh salmon and lampreys were being regularly purchased at the Saturday market in Chepstow and consumed on estates at Framlingham in Suffolk.[1] Cheese was another commodity that moved between lordship estates, as it was exported regularly to London from Llandovery, along with herds of oxen valued at 5*s*. each in 1356.[2]

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[1] Dyer, C.C. (1989) "The Consumer and the Market in the Later Middle Ages", *Ec. Hist. Rev.* 2nd series, 42, 312; Ridgard, J. (ed.) (1985) *Medieval Framlingham Select Documents 1270-1524*, Boydell Press, 91

[2] PRO: SC6/1218/6

2.2 Marcher Lordship in South East Wales

The Marcher earldom of Hereford was significant in the political, military and economic conquest of south Wales. It provided a strong base from which to penetrate westward with a programme of castle building and consolidation. The creation of Marcher lordships in south Wales was largely a speculative venture that came about due to the otherwise disproportionate amount of resources that would have been required in order to effectively subjugate Wales.[3] The Norman conquerors discovered, as the Romans had done over a thousand years before them, that a mountainous landscape and a fractured political system with no single administrative structure governing all of the land, would prove a difficult barrier to break down.[4] Subsequently, leading Norman barons were given the remit of bringing the region under control and in doing so generous rights were granted to them.

The *raison d'être* of the Norman overlords was not simply conquest for its own sake. The creation of the Marches was initially an attempt to secure stability along a troublesome border which evolved into an extension and consolidation of control. The commercial aspect is one that was always present but which has rarely been considered in detail by historians of south Wales in the post-Conquest period.[5] Inevitably, military conquest gave way to concerns of everyday life, as the accumulation of wealth was dependant on economic success. A simplified overview of the lordships under consideration in this chapter and the Marcher lords who held them is contained in Tables 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4.

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[3] Davies, R.R. (1987) *Conquest, Coexistence and Change, Wales 1063 - 1415* (Oxford, University Press), 139

[4] *Ibid.* 100

[5] Studies of Welsh medieval trade prior to this investigation usually pre-date 1920

Tables 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 are simplified, in that they give an overview without detailing the often complex machinations that took place as lordships changed hands. Such a table would prove virtually indecipherable in its complexity. Each of these lordships would have been subject to varying commercial rights, depending on the generosity of the respective Marcher lord.

Two prominent Marcher families who dominated most of the south east Wales lordships when economic prosperity was at its height in the second half of the thirteenth century were the de Bohuns, whose lordships covered Breconshire, and the de Clares, who held much of Gwent and Glamorgan (see Map 2.1). The de Bohuns, as earls of Hereford, held Breconshire for three generations from 1241 to 1373, whilst the de Clares, who had risen to prominence in England in the late eleventh century when William the Conqueror granted the family lands in Kent and East Anglia, held lordships in Gwent and Glamorgan between 1217 and 1314. The de Clare power base had gradually shifted westward, as control was extended into south Wales during the thirteenth century and, later, into Ireland. Along the way both the Bohuns and the Clares built castles, established new towns, and endowed monastic houses. Subsequently, as a result of this activity, they increased in wealth, status and power. Despite not possessing all of the south east Wales lordships, between them they did hold a substantial block. When the last of the male de Clare line died with the death of Gilbert de Clare at Bannockburn in 1314, the value of the Clare lands in south Wales was almost on a par with those held by the family in England.[6] Inquisitions held in 1317, prior to the partition of the lordships, reveal that the Clares possessed land to the value of £1,740, 7*s.* 7*d.* in Wales compared with £2,258, 6*s.* 2*d.* in England.[7] By 1326 the former de Clare lordships in England and Wales were

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[6] Bartley, K. (1996), 30 - 33

[7] Figures drawn from PRO: C47/9/23, 24, 25

Lordship	Dates	Name of Marcher Lord
Abergavenny:	c.1087 - c.1090s	Hamelin de Ballon
	c.1119 - 1141/2	Brian de Wallingford
	1141/2 - 1165	Miles of Gloucester and heirs
	1165 - 1230	de Braose family
	c.1235 - 1238	Gilbert Marshall
	c. 1238 - 1273	de Cantilupe family
	1273 - 1389	Hastings family
	1391 - 1392	Reynold Grey
	1392 - 1411	William Beauchamp
Blaenllyfni:	c.1093 - c.1125	Bernard de Neufmarche
	c.1125 - 1165	Miles of Gloucester and heirs
	c.1190 - 1310	Fitzherbert/Fitzpeter
	1310 - 1322	Mortimer of Chirk
	1322 - 1326	Despenser family
	1327 - 1330	Mortimer of Wigmore
	1330 - 1354	Talbot family
	1354 - 1408	Edward Mortimer and heirs
Brecon:	c.1093 - c.1125	Bernard de Neufmarche
	c.1125 - 1165	Miles of Gloucester and heirs
	c.1165 - 1208	William de Braose
	1213 - 1230	de Braose family
	1241 - 1322	de Bohun family
	1322 - 26	Despenser family
	1326 - 1373	de Bohun family
	1380 - 1388	Henry Bolingbroke
	1399 -	Duchy of Lancaster

Table 2.1: A simplified outline of the south east Wales lordships and their Marcher lords between 1100 and 1400 (After R.R. Davies, J.E. Lloyd and William Rees, with amendments)

Caerleon and Usk:	c.1090 - c.1119	Wynebald de Ballon and heirs
	c.1119 - 1138	Walter fitz Richard de Clare
	c.1138 - c.1149	Gilbert fitz Gilbert de Clare
	c.1149 - 1176	Richard Strongbow
	1189 - 1245	Marshall family
	1245 - 1314	de Clare family
	1317 - 1322	Amory family
	1322 - 1326	Despenser family
	1327 - 1360	Elizabeth de Burgh
	1360 -1368	Lionel, Duke of Clarence
	1368 - 1408	Edward Mortimer and heirs

Table 2.2: The Marcher lords of the lordship of Caerleon and Usk

Striguil (Chepstow):	c.1080 - 1096	William, count of Eu
	c.1119 - 1138	Walter fitz Richard de Clare
	c.1138 - c.1149	Gilbert fitz Gilbert de Clare
	c.1149 - 1176	Richard Strongbow
	1189 - 1245	Marshall family
	1245 - 1306	Bigod family
	1310 - 1399	Thomas de Brotherton & heir
Ewyas Lacy:	1095 - c.1121	Lacy family
	c.1121 - 1137	Payn fitz John
	1137 - 1155	Roger, son of Miles of Glos.
	c.1155 - 1241	Lacy family
	1241 -	lordship divided
	1316 - 1369	Burghersh family
	1369 -	Despenser family

Table 2.3: The Marcher lords of the lordships of Striguil and Ewyas Lacy, between 1100 and 1400

Lordship	Dates	Name of Marcher Lord
Glamorgan:	c.1090 - 1107	Robert fitz Hamo
	c.1121 - 1147	Robert, earl of Gloucester
	1147 - 1183	William of Gloucester
	1189 - 1216	John, count of Mortain
	1217 - 1314	de Clare family
	1317 - 1326	Despenser family
	1337 -	Despenser family
Gower:	c.1107 - 1184	Beaumont family
	1203 - 1208	de Braose family
	1213 - 1322	de Braose family
	1322 - 1326	Hugh Despenser
	1331 - 1354	Mowbray family
	1354 - 1397	Beauchamp family
	1397 -	Mowbray family
Gwynllŵg (Newport):	c.1090 - 1107	Robert fitz Hamo
	c.1121 - 1147	Robert, earl of Gloucester
	1147 - 1183	William of Gloucester
	1189 - 1216	John, count of Mortain
	1217 - 1314	de Clare family
	1317 - 1318	Audley
	1318 - 1326	Despenser family
	1327 - 1347	Audley
	1347 -	Stafford family
Monmouth & Three Castles:	c.1080 - 1256	William fitz Baderon and heirs
	1256 - 1257	Lord Edward
	1267 - 1361	Edward of Lancaster & heirs
	1361 - 1399	John of Gaunt
	1399 -	Duchy of Lancaster

Table 2.4: The Marcher lords of the lordships of Glamorgan, Gower, Gwynllŵg, Monmouth and the Three Castles between 1100 and 1400

valued at over £5000 per annum with the holdings for the Welsh lordships accounting for a substantial proportion of this at £2,522 17*s.* 9*d.*[8] These figures are, Fryde believes, likely to be a minimum estimate, particularly in the case of England, with the actual values in both instances being much greater.[9]

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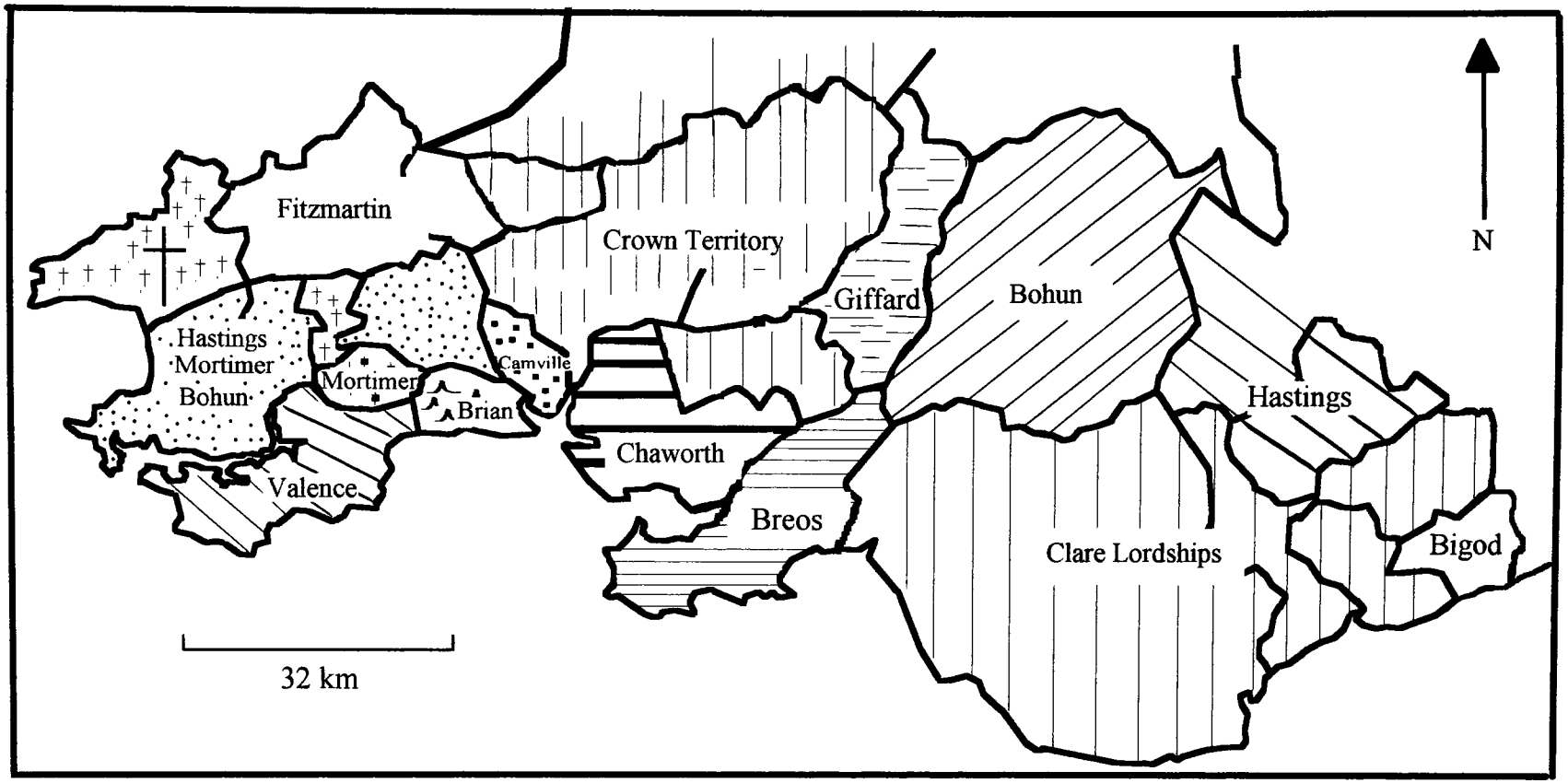
[8] E.B. Fryde (1951) "The Deposits of Hugh Despenser the Younger with Italian bankers", *Ec. Hist. Rev.* 2nd series III, 344-62

[9] *Ibid.*, 360



Map 2.1: The Marcher lordships and their Marcher lords in the 1280s (after William Rees)

A recent study by R.L. Penrose has emphasised the homogenous nature of urban development in the Clare Marcher lordships.[10] He examined the towns that the Clare family inherited in 1217 and 1245 and the new settlements that were founded during their period of tenure and proposed that the new foundations were created in order to perform a specific function or purpose within and for the de Clare family lordships.[11] For example, Trelech was the main iron producing centre, Cowbridge the agricultural marketing centre for the Vale of Glamorgan and Caerphilly the military centre.[12]

This theory, that settlements were developed by the de Clares to perform specific functions is based, in part, on archaeological evidence from Trelech which suggests that the town was in decline before the ravages of the Black Death and the Glyndŵr revolt. Specifically its decline has been linked to the ending of the Clare line.[13] The demise of the de Clare dynasty triggered a period of social unrest that was exacerbated by the sustained period of agricultural distress of 1315-22. These incidences were part of a series of events in the fourteenth century which sent the south Wales economy into gradual decline. These events may have actually served to drive trade behind the town walls, as they offered havens of relative safety and some measure of protection, especially those towns in the heart of Glamorgan that were less susceptible to Welsh attack.

William Rees considered iron to be a rare and expensive commodity in south Wales during the Middle Ages.[14] It appears that iron production was an important part of life in medieval Trelech. Ray Howell, the director of the Trelech excavations,

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[10] Penrose, R.L. (1997) *Urban Development in the Lordships of Glamorgan, Gwynllŵg, Caerleon and Usk under the Clare Family, 1217 - 1314* Unpublished PhD. thesis University of Wales

[11] *Ibid.*, 164

[12] *Ibid.*, 162-4

[13] Howell, R. (2000a) "Excavations at Trelech: 1996 - 1999", *Mon. Ant.* 17, 133

[14] Rees, W. (1924), 114

has argued for the town having been the main iron production centre for the Clare lordships.[15] This hypothesis is an interesting one and seems to be borne out by the remains of bloomery furnaces and the large quantities of bloomery slag uncovered there. It is also the case that archaeological excavations at a range of sites including Rumney castle[16] and the decayed town of Kenfig[17] along with rural farmsteads such as Llanelen in Gower[18] have all turned up quantities of iron slag demonstrating the range of sites at which production was taking place. Indeed, it could be argued that, as Trelech is one of the few comparatively well explored sites, subject to annual excavations since the late 1980s, iron production could have also played a role to a greater or lesser extent in any given settlement from the Clare lordships or elsewhere dating from the period. Therefore, regular excavations at other medieval sites could also yield considerable amounts of slag. Yet, so little archaeological work has taken place in places such as Cardiff, Newport, Llantrissant, Caerphilly and numerous other large (by medieval Welsh standards) settlements, that the amount of evidence merely represents the current state of research. Iron had many uses and would have been important for tools, weapons, armour and sundry materials for construction such as nails and wheel rims.

2.3 Borough Status

The medieval borough may have been considered to have been an 'island of freedom within feudal society', however the rights and privileges granted to a borough varied between lordships.[19] Dyer has argued that borough status provided an

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[15] Howell, R. (2000b), 211-22

[16] Courtney, P. (1983) *The Rural Landscape of Eastern and Lower Gwent c.1070- 1750* Unpublished PhD. thesis University of Wales, citing K. Lightfoot, *personal communication*

[17] Robbins, T. (1997) "Kenfig, Castle Environs", *Arch. Wales* 37, 81 - 84

[18] Kissock, J.A. & Wright, N. (2001) "The Excavation of a Charcoal-burning Platform at Llanelen, Gower" *Stud. Celt.*, 35, 143-59

[19] Unwin, P.T.H. (1978) "Towns and Trade 1066 - 1500" in Dodgshon, R.A. & Butlin, R.A. (eds.) *An Historical Geography of England and Wales*, (London, Academic Press) 123

artificial stimulus to trade.[20] According to Dyer, the fact that there are a greater density of boroughs to be found in Wales and the west than in the east of England reflects the fact that the western half of Britain needed such a stimulus to trade. The east did not, Dyer argues, because it had been trading with the continent for centuries. Recent research in south west England partly supports this view. Kowaleski suggests that there are a greater density of boroughs in the south west of England for a variety of reasons, including local demand. Kowaleski agrees with Dyer's hypothesis but also forwards other reasons for the greater densities of boroughs, markets and fairs to be found in the region. Other factors that Kowaleski highlights as leading to more trading places are the difficulties of inland transportation, along with a broad range of specialisms. including arable, pastoral, maritime and mining activity, that were to be found within the region. A diversity that, Kowaleski maintains, other, comparable, regions lacked.[21]

Identifying a location as being a medieval borough is not always a straightforward task. The usual way of doing so is to examine evidence from borough charters. Unfortunately, for some settlements there is no surviving charter evidence. In some instances post-medieval sources are used to justify the identification of a settlement as being a medieval borough, unfortunately this is not always conclusive when the source comes from a considerable time after the period concerned and may reflect a later conferment of privileges. Contemporary medieval documents are of little assistance, as terms such as *burgi* and *burgensis* do, on occasions, occur in rural contexts. For example, the villagers of 'Little' Llantrisant in the lordship of Usk were being described as 'burgesses' in fourteenth century ministers' accounts.[22] This

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[20] Dyer (1992), 151

[21] Kowaleski, M. (1995), 76-77

[22] PRO: SC6/1112/3

source is by no means in isolation.[23] As G.H. Martin put it there is 'no formula which defines all the kinds of community to which the terms *burh* or *burgus* . . .were applied.'[24]

The conventional way for a lord to grant rights to his burgesses was through the issuing of charters. The granting of a charter represented a specific agreement between the lord and the townsfolk. For many of the boroughs of south Wales there is at least some surviving charter evidence, if not in the form of the original charter itself then by way of a subsequent confirmation by a new lord. Some boroughs, though, are lacking in early charters with Llantrissant being a notable example where there is no actual surviving evidence.[25] Later charters of Llantrissant make no mention of a either a market or fair, though its status as a presumed medieval borough suggests that it would have possessed both. As J.B. Davies has pointed out, the existing charters imply that at the very least a market existed due to prohibitions on any non-burgesses keeping stalls, shops and taverns within the town.[26] Documentary evidence examined for this research has confirmed that markets and fairs were held in Llantrissant in the medieval era. Ministers' accounts from 1313 reveal that a weekly market was held in the town every Friday[27] and an annual fair was being held around the Feast of St. Peter ad Vicula.[28] Penrose suggests that a charter may not have been granted to Llantrissant during the period of Clare tenure due to the possibility that, as a trading centre, it may have been largely made up of Welshmen and as such there

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[23] See PRO: C133/32/7 for example

[24] Martin, G.H. (1963) "The English Borough in the Thirteenth Century", *Trans. Royal Hist. Soc.* 5, 13, 125

[25] For a discussion see Davies, J.B. (1989) *The Freemen of the Ancient Borough of Llantrissant* (Stroud, Alan Sutton),

[26] *Ibid.*, 53

[27] PRO: SC6/1202/9

[28] PRO: C133/130; confirmed in 1346 see *Cardiff Records*, 1, 110-11; also PRO: SC6/1202/6

was a reluctance to grant the town a series of rights for its inhabitants.[29] However, Neath possesses a charter dating from the same period and there is evidence of Welshmen trading there. Perhaps the biggest difference between Neath and Llantrissant in this respect is that Neath was subject to a strong influence by ecclesiastical authorities. Neath Abbey rented out many tenements within the town, and included the Welsh in its commercial life. Neath Abbey would have benefited from any prosperity in the town and perhaps it was they who requested charters from the lord in order to recognise formally its status as a market town and further encourage its fledgling economy.[30]

In practice the lord could provide ovens, brew houses, and charge a small fee for their use, compelling their burgesses to use them, or, as was the case in Cardiff, allow burgesses to bake and brew freely. Cardiff burgesses had rights confirmed by charter to bake bread in their own ovens rather than be compelled to use facilities provided by the lord.[31] In Swansea too, burgesses were given the right to bake bread in their own ovens, brew their own ale, and do, 'all things for their profit freely and quietly'.[32] Swansea received its first charter between 1158 and 1184, granted by William de Newburgh, earl of Warwick and lord of Gower. Certainly trade was taking place at Swansea well before 1184. King John's charter of 1215 discusses specific trading rights and mentions a market, albeit no specific day is mentioned at this time.[33] Indeed there are no surviving records giving specific information on markets and three annual fairs in Swansea until 1367.[34] In twelfth century charters, Swansea

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[29] Penrose (1997) *op. cit.* 178

[30] See below, The Monastic Influence on Transport and Trade

[31] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* 1042 - 1216, 1

[32] *Brit. Bor. Chart. 1153-84, 51*

[33] PRO: C53/12/2

[34] PRO: C135/207/34

burgesses were not only granted peace within their houses, but also for a space of seven feet or 3.66m before their door.[35] It is unclear whether the burgesses themselves were meant to maintain this space or whether it was done on their behalf by the officers of the lord. In the latter half of the twelfth century the burgesses of both Cardiff and Swansea were paying twelve pence yearly, 'for all service.'[36] The lord also regulated weights and measures and established courts for the settling of disputes. The lord could additionally benefit from burgage rents and tolls at market.

An entry in the Patent Roll of 1313 reflects the extent to which efforts were made to protect the status of the borough and the existence of their inhabitants. It reads:

> '. . .(to) other boroughs in Wales . . . no one in parts neighbouring to the borough within a circuit of five leagues of them shall buy or sell wares, however they may be called, except in the boroughs themselves, under pain of forfeiture . . .'[37]

Despite this entry in the Patent Rolls, some Marcher lords permitted the establishment of weekly markets in rural areas. Llanfair Discoed appears to be a Gwent example.[38] Whilst in Glamorgan, Llantwit never achieved borough status but possessed both a weekly market and annual fairs. In Breconshire there was a veritable proliferation of rural fairs and the occasional rural market.[39] Dyer has commented that whilst lords may have wished to channel trade for their own benefit they would have lacked the coercive power to dominate the market. Consequently, trade would have taken on a

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[35] PRO: C135/207/34; see also PRO: E164/1

[36] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* 1147-84, 47

[37] *Cal. Pat. Roll.* 1307 -13, 578

[38] Cal. Chart. Roll. III, 123

[39] See tables 2.8 and 2.11, below

life of its own which could not have been comprehensively managed even by the most powerful of lords.[40]

It was in the best interests of the lords to provide an administrative structure based around towns. The town represented a more efficient way of redistributing goods and allowed greater control to be exerted over the activities of the subject population. Despite the fact that not all aspects of everyday life were governed by the Marcher lords, they played a significant role in the daily life of peasants, burgesses, the clergy and travelling merchants. Of the extant source material, mainly ministers' accounts and inquisitions *post-mortem*, the majority come from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The construction of new towns would have been a laborious and expensive process. This would have been compounded by problems of transportation. The additional cost of a programme of road construction would have been far too prohibitive, with the prospect of little reward, for a Marcher lord to bear.

If, for a moment, the issue of borough status and whether certain settlements were or were not regarded as boroughs in south Wales during the Middle Ages is set aside, certain key questions remain. Firstly, in 1100 south Wales possessed a lower population than many of the English regions. Overall, population levels in England and Wales grew but there is no reason to assume that the population of south Wales grew at a proportionately greater rate than that of elsewhere. The comparative abundance of commercial centres could be due to the protracted nature of the conquest and the subsequent territorial division into Marcher lordships. This meant that each respective Marcher lord would want their own commercial centres within their lordship to prosper, as it would benefit them.

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[40] Dyer, C.C. (1984) *Everyday Life in Medieval England*, (Hambledon Press) 291-2

The possibility of trade taking place away from the recognised market place should also be considered. There seems little doubt of a tradition of trade being conducted in the open country in south Wales in the pre-Conquest period and efforts were obviously made to prevent this practice following the Conquest. Individual lordships were not self contained as they operated within the wider world but a lord would have taken measures to protect his interests within his own lordships and would not have wanted commercial settlements contained within his bounds to be directly competing with each other for trade. In south Wales the lord held the power to grant a market, a right that in England was held by the king.[41]

There were weekly markets held at Llantwit Major despite it not being borough. Llantwit seems to have prospered as a result of the success of Cowbridge nearby but may have initially developed quite independently. Llantwit's status is indicated in the income it received from the tolls from the ports at nearby Barry and Ogmore.[42] The north/south axis involving the three settlements in the heart of the lordship of Glamorgan - Llantwit, Cowbridge and Llantrissant - appears to have been an attractive one. Cowbridge seems to have been ideally located in the heart of the agriculturally rich Vale of Glamorgan. Additionally, Cowbridge may have served as a port during the Middle Ages, despite the Thawe not being navigable as far as Cowbridge today. Llantwit was not a planted town and possessed no borough charter but developed functions akin to urban status, as is reflected in the existence of a weekly market. It may have served as the port for goods entering and leaving Cowbridge.[43] It is also the site of an important pre-Conquest religious settlement and is recorded in some sources as Llanilltyd.[44] Its commercial growth may have

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[41] See Britnell (1978), (1981a)

[42] PRO: C133/77/3

[43] *Cal. IPM.* III no. 371

[44] *Ibid.*

developed from this origin. Soulsby suspects that the post-Conquest medieval settlement evolved in the shadow of St. Illtyd's church.[45] This is a reasonable assumption given the early medieval religious significance and would cover the areas around what is today known as Wine Street and Commercial Street. The antiquity of these names is uncertain but they could be indicative of the trades and practices that took place there. Street names in other Glamorgan towns are suspected to date from the Middle Ages. Llantwit may have been developing a commercial role quite independently in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries, prior to the establishment of the planned towns by the Norman overlords, and this role would have increased during the thirteenth century as towns such as Cowbridge grew and undoubtedly the communities of the two settlements interacted. As has been stated, Llantwit could easily have evolved in to the role of a coastal port for the export of produce from the Vale of Glamorgan and the import of luxury consumer goods. The evidence for a pre-Conquest commercial centre remains circumstantial but had not a commercial centre already existed at Llantwit then other locations may have been chosen, such as Barry, in order to act as the port for produce from the Vale. Cowbridge has traditionally been viewed as a rural marketing centre for the Vale of Glamorgan, due to its location and the burgages in a ribbon development pattern appearing outside the town walls along the line of the Portway.[46] The actual situation was likely to have been more complicated than this. Indeed, whilst Cowbridge would have served as a rural marketing centre just like almost every other town in south Wales during this period, its role would have been much more varied. The import of goods from somewhere such as Llantwit would have been far more beneficial than receiving goods from the port of Cardiff where tolls were higher and would have involved a journey along the Portway. In itself this could be hazardous, as the main highway would have been a focal point in attracting thieves and war bands during the periods

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[45] Soulsby (1983), 176

[46] Robinson (1980b) *passim*

of native unrest. The lower Vale of Glamorgan between Cowbridge and Llantwit would have been a much safer place to be as it was under secure control, far enough away from being troubled by the Welsh. Equally, the Vale of Glamorgan is now, and would have been, one of the most agriculturally prosperous parts of Wales and no doubt its produce would be appearing in the settlements along the line of the Portway. It is not unreasonable to assume that wool and cattle from the Vale or the nearby uplands would have been exported by way of the markets at Cowbridge and Llantwit.

Elsewhere, Welsh lords were establishing urban centres on the Anglo-Norman model. An example of thirteenth century growth was the creation of a borough at Aberafan by the Leisian ap Morgan Fychan. Its initial charter was granted giving rights to English burgesses as well as Welsh and it is unique as the only example of a south Wales borough being incorporated by a Welshman and not a Marcher lord. Aberafan was granted a charter by Edward le Despenser on 20 April 1373. Although Leisian's charter had already been confirmed in 1350, the date he issued it is not known.[47] Leisian, as lord of Afan (Aberafan), even joined in granting rights to the monasteries, becoming a patron of Margam Abbey and in doing so granting the Abbey rights to empark within his demesne cattle found on the Walda which surrounded the lands named as *cormerchs* and *neumerchs*.[48] Leisian remained subordinate to the Clare Marcher lords, but unlike the Clares and other lords in the March he lived within his town, granting generous rights to its burgesses and *censarii*. The nature of the relationship between the lords of Glamorgan and the lord of Aberafan may have been pragmatic. After all, Leisian embraced the traditions of the Norman overlords, unlike the other Welsh lords at Senghenydd, who remained strongly opposed to Anglo-Norman rule.

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[47] *Clark Cartae* no. 1038, 1333

[48] *Clark Cartae* no. 842I, 979: granted on 1st May 1304

2.4 The Concept of Periodic Marketing

This section will examine in detail how the concept of periodic marketing works, drawing on ethnographic parallels and detailing how a marketing system existed in the group of lordships that in later periods would constitute the county of Gwent. Marketing on a periodic basis is a well established practice in many parts of the world. It has been taking place in parts of Asia for hundreds of years and was operating in Africa long before contact with Europeans. Several studies of the process have been undertaken, some of the best known examples were carried out in western and northern Nigeria during the late 1960s and early 1970s.[49] The concept of periodic marketing is concerned with temporal and spatial variations and is based around two models: (i) the consumer model, and (ii) the trader model. The consumer model sees geographical distances decrease between markets held on the same day. This is taken as being the result of consumer demand. Whereas the trader model sees markets that are distant in space separated by time, requiring a trader to travel from one market to the next held on the following day. In turn, this is taken to mean that consumer demand is not great enough to entice a trader to remain exclusively in one place. Instead it allows them to complete a 'circuit' of trading settlements. Hence, a trader is compelled to go from a Monday market to a Tuesday market and on to a Wednesday market and by doing so follows a temporal progression. Each market becomes a temporary central place. The concept was identified, and its understanding developed, in studies carried out in China in the 1940s and Africa and Asia during the late 1960s and 1970s.[50] Its application in a medieval British context was pioneered by P.T.H. Unwin in his study of early markets in Nottinghamshire.[51]

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[49] Eighmy, T.H. (1972) "Rural Periodic Marketing and the Extension of an Urban System", *Economic Geography* 48, 299-315; Scott, E.P. (1972) "The Spatial Structure of Rural Northern Nigeria: Farmers, Periodic Markets and Villages," *Economic Geography* 48, 316 -32

[50] For example, see Yang, C-K., (1944) *A North China Local Market Economy: A Study of Periodic Markets in Chowping Hsien, Shantung* (NewYork, Institute of Pacific Relations); and Smith, R.H.T. (1979 & 1980) "Periodic Market Places and Periodic Marketing: A Review and Prospect", *Progress in Human Geography*, 3, 471-505 and 4, 1-31

[51] Unwin, P.T.H. (1981) "Rural Marketing in Medieval Nottinghamshire", *J. Hist. Geog.*, 7, 3, 231 -

Unwin's study of Nottinghamshire markets in the Middle Ages did not prove conclusively that either the consumer or trader models of periodic marketing were in operation. Unwin did note that an attempt may have been made to spread markets out, so that neighbouring markets were not held on the same day.[52] The inconclusive results of this, and other similar studies, led some historians to question whether such patterns existed in Britain at all during the Middle Ages.[53] It was argued that researchers often assume that medieval markets *must* have fitted into a regional commercial system. The evidence, the critics argued, suggested that even if such systems did exist they were probably 'haphazard and frequently ignored'.[54]

Similar concerns had been expressed by geographers in early studies of periodic markets in the developing world. Prior to the 1970s, studies of periodic market systems tended to be descriptive. As such it was often assumed that periodic marketing worked for the benefit of all concerned. No account was made for that fact that some of the market locations may have been quite marginal within the overall 'system'. Studies in Bihar in north eastern India adopted a more refined methodology which tackled issues that had been overlooked in earlier research. These included: settlement hierarchies, size, function, the possibility of conflict between and within regions and the topographical influences that limited the value of straight line measurements between settlements.[55] Overall this led to a more sensitive appraisal of marketing systems.

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[52] *Ibid.*, 244

[53] For a discussion see Masschaele, J. (1997), 174

[54] *Ibid.*, 175

[55] Smith, R.H.T. (1979) 'Periodic Market Places and Periodic Marketing: A Review and Prospect', *Progress in Human Geography*, 3, 474-5

This refinement in research methods did not go unnoticed by medieval historians. Subsequently, several regional examples of medieval periodic market systems have now been identified. One study by James Masschaele in Huntingdonshire emphasised the hierarchical nature of settlement.[56] Here, Masschaele was blessed with a greater range and depth of documentary sources than are available for the present study area. These allowed changing patterns of markets to be identified between 1286 and 1348, when the number of operating markets rose from eight to eighteen.[57] These new markets, Masschaele argues, were established to fit into an internal network around the county town of Huntingdon, with some markets being of comparatively little importance within the overall hierarchy but where a cyclical option was available to the travelling merchant.[58] These findings led Masschaele to argue for a highly developed urban sector in England prior to 1300. However, this view has been challenged by Richard Britnell.[59] Britnell urges caution in accepting Masschaele's view that by the mid-thirteenth century most regions in England had developed a hierarchy of market settlements based around one large town which dominated the regional economy and the demand for agricultural produce. He points out that there appear to have been larger numbers of rural dwellers than townsfolk, people who could not have produced their own food and, also, did not live near to a large commercial centre. Therefore, there would have been a demand for a variety of provisions either at markets in small towns and larger villages or through informal channels leading to less reliance on one commercial centre.[60]

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[56] Masschaele, J. (1997) *op. cit.* 174-5; see also Masschaele, J. "The Multiplicity of Medieval Markets Reconsidered" *J. Hist. Geog.*, 20, 3, (1994), 259

[57] Masschaele (1997) *op. cit.*, 176-78

[58] *Ibid.*, 175

[59] Britnell, R.H. (2000) "Urban Demand in the English Economy, 1300-1600" in J.A. Galloway, (ed.) *Trade, Urban Hinterlands and Market Integration 1300 - 1600*, Centre for Metropolitan History, Working Paper 3, (London, Institute of Historical Research) 1-21

[60] *Ibid.* 3

Essentially it is the frequency with which a market is held which differentiates a periodic market from a daily market. A periodic market in any one given location will have several marketless days around it. The periodic nature of a market would be an irrelevant concern for some of the participants there as they may only attend one market in a week, that which is nearest to them. This would not be the case for others who depended on following the market cycle in order to make a living.

One interesting and relatively recent project that involved the introduction of a periodic market system to a region took place in Papua New Guinea. It is relevant for consideration here because the system was introduced into a rural landscape that had long established trade routes but where hitherto no formal marketing arrangement had existed. This is a situation not unlike south Wales in the Middle Ages. Developed by the Australian National University, in association with the government of Papua New Guinea, and implemented during 1974, the scheme sought to maintain the flow in special commodities exported from the island whilst at the same time making a greater range of goods and services available to more people throughout the island.[61] The concept of the *'Maket Raun'* - deriving its name from the Neo-Melanesian words for *market place* and *to move around* - was developed to encourage local trade, promote a fairer distribution of services and get more ordinary people in rural areas participating in the economy.

Previously, Papua New Guineans living in rural areas had to travel long distances at great expense in a sometimes hostile environment in order to obtain goods and services. The new *maket raun* system consisted of a mobile unit which moved into different areas to a specific location on a fixed schedule. In doing so it allowed rural dwellers regular access to goods and services whilst at the same time

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[61] Weinand, H.C. (1976) "Introducing New Marketing Concepts to Papua New Guinea: The Maket Raun," *The Australian Geographer*, 13 216-19

overcoming the problem of low demand by visiting a different location each day.[62] In this instance the system based on the trader model of periodic marketing appears to have benefited a large proportion of the population.

Under the old system in Papua New Guinea some services were provided in rural areas but there was no fixed time and no fixed location. The establishment of a set pattern served to increase the drawing power of the *maket raun* as a range of goods and services were brought together, each reinforcing the other. The system allowed greater contact between the government and the people and the wider exchange of information. Commercially, it allowed the sale of agricultural surpluses in a market environment where prices could be compared. Wholesaling and retailing of goods to fixed store traders could still take place but the periodic *maket raun* could additionally provide high order goods that otherwise would not normally be stocked by stores in these rural areas.[63] The cost of overcoming distance is high and profit margins are low, but periodic markets such as the *maket raun* serve to concentrate supply and demand in time and place.

Against this backdrop, evidence will be sought for marketing systems in a specific region of south Wales during the Middle Ages, in order to see if parallels do exist. The following section will commence by taking up some of the concerns already identified, before studying the evidence for medieval markets within south east Wales.

In light of the refined methodologies employed in Asian and African research projects, and that of Masschaele in his Huntingdonshire study, the present investigation will attempt to move away from simply being a descriptive analysis of

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[62] *Ibid.*, 217

[63] *Ibid.*, 218

market days and their locations. In England there is good evidence to suggest that some markets existed in name only as the result of a formal market grant, but where no actual weekly market was ever held.[64] This makes a more detailed consideration vital so as not to include in a network a market that never actually existed.

Documentary evidence concerning matters of everyday life in Britain as a whole during the Middle Ages tend to be limited, with the problem in south Wales being particularly acute.[65] This has led many historians to concur that the actual situation, particularly regarding transport and trade, would have been more complex than the surviving sources often suggest. Within the bounds of the present investigation there were several lordships: Abergavenny, Monmouth and the Three Castles, Chepstow, Gwynllŵg, Caerleon and Usk, each with its own administrative centre. At various stages throughout the study period these lordships were held by different Marcher lords, all of whom would have wanted the market towns in their lordships to be the most prosperous as it would mean greater profit and prestige for them.

Determining the size and relative importance of the settlements within these medieval lordships is far from being a straightforward task. There were nine locations in the study area holding a weekly market during the post-Conquest period: Grosmont, Usk, Abergavenny, Monmouth, Trelech, Caerleon, Llanfair Discoed, Chepstow and Newport. Llanfair Discoed stands out as being the only example of a non-urban market held in this area prior to 1400. The comparative size and success of these settlements in relation to each other does, unfortunately, tend to be rather elusive. The status of a location in subsequent periods is no indication of its standing in the Middle Ages. Nor is the opposite true, as is evidenced by the fortunes of

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[64] Masschaele (1994) *op. cit.* 255 -271

[65] For a discussion see, Jack, R.I. (1972)

Trelech and Grosmont, both of which were major urban medieval settlements which declined so as to become rural villages today. Hence, their current existence belies their earlier prosperity.

Burgesses within each settlement would have been subject to different rights from those in neighbouring lordships, depending on the generosity of the respective Marcher lords. Consequently, not all of the locations would have been able to achieve economic growth on an equal administrative footing. Unlike the *Maket Raun*, where a veritable 'clean sheet' was available upon which to establish a marketing system and where one central authority existed to implement it, the founders of trading centres in Gwent during the Middle Ages would have had to take into account neighbouring settlements under the jurisdiction of different Marcher lords

In the face of a limited amount of documentary evidence, efforts were made to extract from the available source material information regarding the size and population of settlements. Settlement size could be determined by examining the number of burgages held in each location within various time frames. The later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries were chosen, as there is comparatively good amount of documentary information from this period and the economy was flourishing at this time. Estimating the size of population for a settlement is fraught with difficulties. There is no real adequate documentation to allow a compilation to be made.[66] One method that has been devised is to take the number of recorded burgages and use a multiplier of four.[67] This formula assumes that a burgage would be occupied by a couple with two children. In itself there are still dangers with this method because in all likelihood there were inhabitants in a settlement who never

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[66] James, T. (1989) "Medieval Carmarthen and its Burgesses: A Study of Town Growth and Burgess Families in the Later Thirteenth Century", *The Carmarthenshire Antiquary* 25, 24

[67] *Ibid.* 24-5

attained burgess status. For example, in 1260 40s. was being received 'from the *censarii*',[68] a merchant class that resided in the town but who did not hold burgess status. It also imposes 'modern' perceptions on the size of a family unit inhabiting a dwelling. Furthermore, surviving accounts reveal that some burgesses owned more than one burgage, sometimes in more than one settlement. Conversely, some burgages were subdivided with multiple tenants, whereas other burgage plots may not have contained a dwelling at all.

These issues are compounded still further by the fact that in terms of analysis the number of burgages and the size of population was influenced by far more than just economic trends. The deleterious effect of intermittent warfare directly affected some settlements and not others. For example, incomes from Usk rose slightly between 1314 and 1316, with the town worth £82 19*s.* 3½ *d.* to its lord in 1314,[69] and £82 19*s.* 5½ *d.* in 1316.[70] However, an inquisition *post-mortem* from September 1314 reveals that Newport yielded a value of £34, 16*s.* 2*d.* to its lord that year,[71] compared with just £15, 4*s.* 9*d* returned in 1316, perhaps reflecting the harmful effect on the town of the revolt led by Llewelyn Bren.[72] Therefore, the evidence from burgage totals as an indicator of commercial success cannot be relied upon uncritically. With these reservations in mind a tentative estimation of comparative settlement sizes by burgage totals is provided in Table 2.5 and of population figures for medieval towns in the Gwent area is listed in Table 2.6. It is apparent that both tables are incomplete, reflecting the overall lack of useful sources from the period.

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[68] PRO: SC6/1094/11

[69] PRO: SC6/927/19

[70] Figure derived from Courtney, P. (1994) *Report on the Excavations at Usk 1965-1976: Medieval and Later Usk* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press), 104

[71] PRO: C134/43/37

[72] PRO: SC6/1202/9

	c.1262	c.1295	c.1307	c.1314
Abergavenny	c.230	-	-	233
Caerleon	112	c.100	c.210	c.280
Chepstow	-	-	308	-
Newport	c. 242	256	228	275
Trelech	-	c.378	271	265
Grosmont	c. 102	-	-	-
Monmouth	c. 190	-	-	-
Usk	283	-	294	296

Table 2.5: Recorded Burgage Totals from Settlements in the Case Study Area

Despite being one of the most widely studied Welsh towns, there is some discrepancy in the sources regarding the figures cited by various authorities for the number of burgages in Usk in 1262. Soulsby and Beresford cite the ministers' accounts for that year as indicating that Usk possessed 141 burgages.[73] A Royal Extent, cited by both Courtney and Penrose, taken in the same year suggests a different figure of 283 burgages.[74] Both primary sources were reconsidered and the second survey is regarded as the more accurate here and hence the figure obtained from it is cited in Table 2.5. There could be several explanations as to the divergence of the sources. It is not unknown for some ministers' accounts to only include figures from tenements inside the walls of a town thereby ignoring any extra mural growth. A

[73] Beresford (1967), 561, and Soulsby (1983) 261 both citing PRO: SC6/1202/1; working on the income from burgage rents, with burgages let for 1 *s.* per annum.

[74] Courtney (1994) 104, 138 and Penrose (1997) 100, both citing PRO: E142/88/2, also assuming that burgage rent stood at 1*s.*

second possibility, is that as the ministers' account figure is derived from rents, it could be that rent was only received from 141 properties, whereas the other burgages may have been vacant, destroyed or under construction at the time of the survey. The undertaking of the Royal Extent may have been initiated to clear up any perceived inaccuracies in the existing accounts. In this instance, however, the most likely explanation is that provided by Courtney, who realised the discrepancy. He believes that the figure from the ministers' account reflects half of the actual value, as it excluded rent from the short period that Usk was held by the Crown during that year.[75]

Table 2.6 (below) uses a multiplier of four in order to determine the size of population in the settlements listed in Table 2.5. As stated, these estimates are tentative and there may have been a much larger population in the open country around these settlements, as the urban population is suspected as having constituted a small percentage of the overall population.[76]

It is apparent that during the mid-thirteenth century Usk was the largest of the settlements in the area (Table 2.5). Unfortunately there are no figures for Chepstow or Trelech *c.*1262 with which to draw a comparison, by 1295 Trelech possessed the highest number of burgages of any of the settlements with 378 burgages. Conversely, there are no comparable figures for Usk from this year which makes it difficult to determine which settlement was the larger of the two. In 1307 Chepstow eclipsed Usk, Trelech and Newport with 308 burgages in the town, with the latter two appearing to be in gradual decline, having witnessed a reduction in the number of burgages.[77] By 1314, the year in which the male line of the de Clare family was

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[75] Courtney (1994), 104

[76] Britnell, R.H. (2000) "Urban Demand in the English Economy, 1300-1600" in J.A. Galloway, (ed.) *Trade, Urban Hinterlands and Market Integration 1300 - 1600*, 3

[77] PRO: C133/127/13

extinguished with the death of Gilbert de Clare, Newport and Caerleon had increased the number of burgages that they possessed, whilst Trelech continued its downward spiral. Usk in 1314 had the highest recorded burgage total from surviving records in that year, and has the highest totals for most of the years listed, but figures for other notable settlements are lacking, preventing an accurate comparison.[78] As a result there is no clearly discernible settlement hierarchy using this method.

	c.1262	**c.1295**	**c.1307**	**c.1314**
Abergavenny	c.920	-	-	932
Caerleon	448	c.400	c.840	c.1, 120
Chepstow	-	-	1, 232	-
Newport	c. 968	1, 024	912	1, 100
Trelech	-	c.1, 512	1, 084	1, 060
Grosmont	c. 408	-	-	-
Monmouth	c. 760	-	-	-
Usk	1, 132	-	1, 176	1, 184
Total	4, 636	2, 936	5, 244	5, 396

Table 2.6: Estimated populations of medieval market towns in the Gwent area based on a multiplier of four from the burgage totals

Overall, the population of England and Wales expanded during the thirteenth century and contracted during the fourteenth century. It has been estimated that by 1300 Wales as a whole boasted a population of roughly 300,000 inhabitants.[79] This

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[78] PRO: C134/43

[79] Davies, J. (1996) *The Making of Wales*, (Cardiff, Cadw/Alan Sutton), 55 presumably using the figure quoted by Russell, J.C. (1948) *British Medieval Population* (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico)

would be greatly reduced during the fourteenth century as political and social unrest was compounded by the agricultural crises of 1315-22 and subsequent outbreaks of the Black Death. By 1400, the population of Wales as a whole would have been less than 200,000.

2.5 Markets in Medieval Gwent

There is persuasive evidence to suggest that the thirteenth century was a dynamic period in the development of both markets and fairs in the Gwent area. An earlier period of origin for the markets is possible, and indeed probable, the evidence for this is lacking. In the case of planned settlements, the establishment of an initial weekly market was a process that went hand in hand with the establishment of a town. However, the earliest references to a settlement do not always indicate the existence of a market. Table 2.7 features a list of settlements which held weekly markets in the study area during the Middle Ages. The fundamental assumption being that all the markets listed actually existed and that they were, for the most part, operating contemporaneously with one another. This is in spite of the considerable date range between the years listed for the first reference to the actual market day and the range of earliest dates of reference to the settlements themselves. The exact chronology of settlement foundation in Gwent remains unclear. Many of the dates for the weekly markets are from the fourteenth century, yet virtually all of these markets were likely to have been operating throughout the second half of the thirteenth century, and in all probability, much earlier. Documents do indeed exist which mention the earlier existence of a market in some of the places listed, however, the present investigation is concerned with finding the earliest reference to the actual market day and not the first reference to a market being in existence. For example, Newport was described as being a 'market town' in 1314,[80] but the precise market

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[80] PRO: C134/43/37

day was only identified from a source dated to 1385.[81] Therefore, the dates cited in Table 2.7 are not dates of origination but dates of earliest reference to the actual market day alongside the earliest reference to the settlement itself.

C.C. Dyer has demonstrated that a wide range of consumers made regular use of weekly markets, in some cases travelling considerable distances in order to do so.[82] As well as the example of salmon and lampreys being sent regularly from Chepstow to Suffolk, cited earlier, there are accounts from Usk of partridges and vinegar, as well as fish, being transported for consumption on English estates.[83] Once established, the initial specific market day for a location tends to have remained fairly static, usually surviving changes in lordship. In the more prosperous settlements additional markets were granted at a later date. It was not until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that market days and dates of fairs in some places changed completely from those originally mentioned in medieval charters. Abergavenny is one example of a location which retained its market day on a Tuesday from the Middle Ages to the present day. This reflects the attractiveness of a Tuesday market as there was no nearby competition on the same day.

It is strikingly apparent that markets in south east Wales were held on each day of the week with the exception of Sunday (Table 2.7). During the early thirteenth century the Church campaigned vigorously to prevent Sunday trading, but interestingly a Sunday market is recorded as being held at Llandaff in 1205.[84] It is

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[81] PRO: C134/43/37; NRL: CRO/C9/CJG/JJ

[82] Dyer, C.C. (1989) "The Consumer and the Market in the Later Middle Ages", *Ec. Hist. Rev.*, 2nd series, 42, 305 - 26

[83] PRO: E101/93/4

[84] *Clark Cartae*, vol. I no. 290, 292-3, and there were others in Pembrokeshire. The comparative scarcity of Sunday markets may reveal a level of success in the campaign, see the following chapter for other Sunday markets.

unlikely to have lasted long, given the Church's stance. The general lack of Sunday markets in south Wales may point to some success on the part of the Church.

Of the two periodic marketing models the trader model appears to be the most applicable. There are some 'same day' markets but their distribution does not, for the most part, adhere to the consumer model. Whilst a descriptive analysis would suggest that one circuit covering the whole of Gwent existed, a closer examination suggests otherwise. Any one market may have belonged to more than one circuit and it seems that several circuits may have operated.

The 'Gwent circuit' described in Table 2.7 does not seem overly beneficial to the trader in terms of the geographical distances he would be required to cover. That is assuming that one circuit, covering all of these settlements, ever existed and that the trader would be compelled to visit each of the markets in turn. The 'circuit' is periodic in that it allows for a market to be held on each day of the week with the exception of Sunday. Given that six distinct lordships fall within the study area it is highly probable that no one single circuit which encompassed each of the market settlements listed ever existed. It is unlikely that a travelling merchant would have the desire, or indeed the resources to visit each market day listed in turn and still have goods to trade. In light of this it is proposed that several trading patterns were in operation within medieval Gwent.

Location	Earliest Reference to Settlement	Market Day	Year of Reference to Market Day	Source of Reference to Market Day
Grosmont	1250	Monday	1362	PRO: C135/169/3
Usk	1131	Monday	1262	PRO: SC6/1202/1
Abergavenny	c.1090	Tuesday	1255	PRO: SC6/1094/11
Monmouth	c.1100	Wednesday	1447	PRO: DL37/15/27; Courtney 1994, 138
Trelech	c.1231	Wednesday	1288	PRO: SC6/1247/21
Llanfair Discoed	N/A	Wednesday	1290	Calendar of Charter Rolls III p. 123
Caerleon	1171	Thursday	1382	PRO: C136/26/4
Grosmont	1250	Friday	1362	PRO: C135/169/3
Monmouth	c.1100	Saturday	1447	PRO: DL37/15/27; Courtney 1994, 138
Chepstow	1075	Saturday	1306	PRO: C133/127
Newport	1172	Saturday	1385	NRL: CRO/C9/CJG/JJ

Table 2.7: The approximate dates of settlement foundation and the earliest references to precise market days of settlements within Gwent

Between 1256 and 1267 Lord Edward (later Edward I) was in possession of the lordships of Abergavenny, Monmouth and the Three Castles. The reference to the precise market day at Abergavenny dates from this time. The close association shared by these lordships remained throughout the Middle Ages as they were incorporated into the duchy of Lancaster group of lordships. The options open to the travelling merchant are varied, with patterns having existed both within and around this group of lordships. Grosmont held markets on a Mondays and Fridays. The nearest Tuesday market was held *c.* twelve miles away in Abergavenny. From Abergavenny, a *c.*

sixteen mile journey could be made to Monmouth for the Wednesday market. In the late thirteenth century a Wednesday market was established at Tretower, providing an alternative a little nearer to the west. The next nearest Thursday market, following the eastern route was established in 1241, a little over ten miles away from Monmouth, in Ross.[85] From Ross, the options are twofold: firstly, it would be possible to travel eight miles to Newent for its Friday market.[86] Secondly, a trader could have instead headed back to Grosmont for the Friday market held there. The latter option would involve a greater journey than travelling to Newent, but it would then allow the opportunity to participate in the Saturday market at nearby Monmouth.

A Monday market was held in Crickhowell and it would seem a natural progression to continue on from there to the Tuesday market six miles away in Abergavenny. Crickhowell also held a market on Thursdays. This Thursday market may have been a destination for a trader who had visited Monmouth's Wednesday market, nevertheless it would involve a trip of roughly twenty two miles in order to trade there. Another option was added in the late thirteenth century, when a new Wednesday market was established at Tretower, between Abergavenny and Crickhowell, by John Pritchard. This market had originally been granted along with an annual fair to Thruxton in Herefordshire but was transferred to Tretower in 1298.[87] Crickhowell and Ross may have provided additional options for a trader operating within the 'Grosmont-Abergavenny-Monmouth' circuit. From the Saturday market in Monmouth a trader could spend Sunday travelling to either Grosmont or Crickhowell in time for the Monday markets that were held in those locations. These patterns are represented cartographically on Map 2.2.

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[85] *Calendar of Charter Rolls* (hereafter: *Cal. Chart. Roll.*) 1226 -57, 256

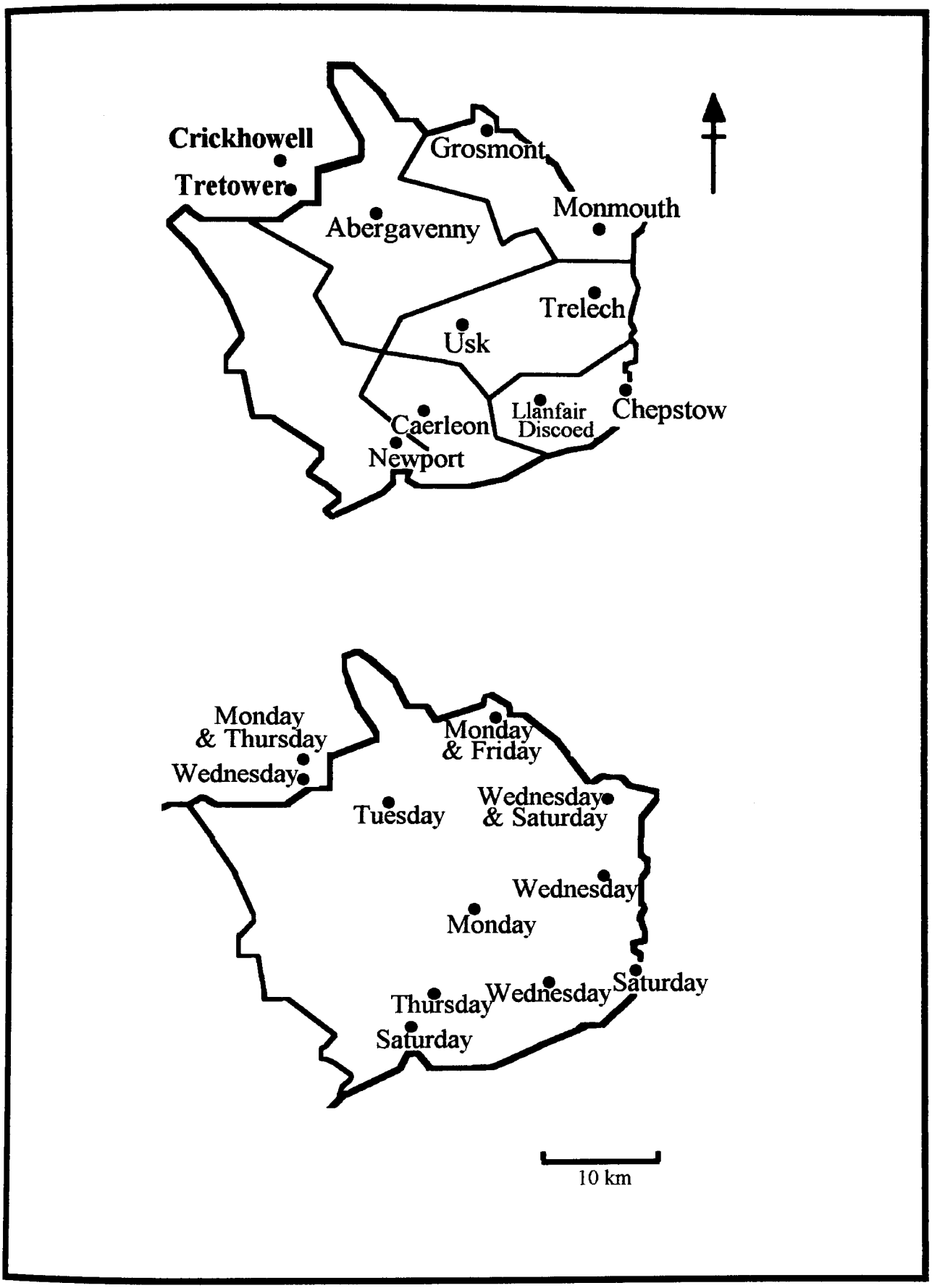
[86] Newent held twice weekly markets in the Middle Ages, the first being officially granted on a Tuesday in 1253. The second, a Friday market, came was granted in 1312, see *Cal. Chart. Roll.* 1226-57, 435; *Cal. Chart. Roll. 1300-26*,206

[87] *Cal. Chart. Roll.* 1257-1300, 471

Abergavenny seems to have been particularly well placed, with the sole Tuesday market in the study area. In addition to drawing in traders from Crickhowell, Tretower and Grosmont it could have additionally attracted travelling merchants from the Monday market that was held in Usk. With approximately thirteen miles separating the two, the distance would not be prohibitive if travelling by horse and cart. Distances between all of the settlements considered so far could be undertaken by travelling to the neighbouring destination until dusk and/or setting off at daybreak to arrive at a reasonable time in order to participate in the market at the next location on the following day.

The respective market days for Usk, Trelech, Caerleon and Newport were Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday. Within the lordship of Chepstow, markets were held at the town of Chepstow on a Saturday and at Llanfair Discoed, near Caerwent, on a Wednesday (Table 2.7). The lordships of Glamorgan and Gwynllŵg were held by the de Clare family from 1217 until 1314. In 1245 the influence of the de Clares was extended further when the family acquired the lordships of Caerleon and Usk. Trelech seems to have originated at this time and the piecemeal pattern of market days in the southern portion of the study area may be explained by this, as not all of the towns were founded in the same period.

Having visited the Monday market in Usk and then, perhaps, the Tuesday market in Abergavenny, it would be possible to make the seventeen mile journey to Trelech in time for the Wednesday market held there. The twenty six mile journey to Caerleon's Thursday market, that would follow, would prove demanding. There is then no immediate Friday market before the Saturday market at Newport. From Newport, the next nearest Monday market in Gwent would be the one held in Usk, roughly fifteen miles away by road. A trader could have set off for Usk from Newport having replenished supplies at the Saturday market.



Map 2.2: Cartographic representation of market days in and around Gwent

In 1308 the lordship of Chepstow was being held by the Crown as a result of the death of Roger Bigod III two years earlier. Within the present study area there are two markets that come within the bounds of the lordship of Chepstow, the first being at Chepstow itself and the second at Llanfair Discoed. To the east, a market was held every Monday at Lydney from at least 1268 when its market was formally granted, though it may have been operating prior to the actual grant being made.[88] There is no known Tuesday market within the immediate vicinity, although a Wednesday market occurs at Llanfair Discoed, approximately seventeen miles west of Lydney. This could be followed by a nine mile journey to the Thursday market at Caerleon. Thus, a Monday-Wednesday-Thursday option exists as a possible circuit. Very little evidence survives which gives details of markets held in Chepstow itself, yet a Saturday market was known to have been held there.[89]

The selection of a precise market day for a settlement could be based on either a conflictive or an integrative approach with respect to surrounding market places.[90] It would then be the individual trader who chose their own circuit depending on the options open to him. After all, a trader may not have wanted to attend a market on each day of the week, but the options were there if they wished to do so. What the surviving accounts do not reveal is details regarding two pertinent issues: firstly, whether ordinary people - who acted as both producers and consumers - were compelled to visit the markets within their own lordship even if it meant ignoring a closer market in a neighbouring one; and secondly, there is an underlying assumption that the new urban centres benefited rural areas by offering wider markets for produce

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[88] Granted to the earl of Warwick in 1268, see *Cal. Chart. Roll.* 1257-1300, 114

[89] PRO: C133/127

[90] Bromley, R.J. (1973) "The Spatial and Temporal Synchronisation of Periodic Markets" *The Swansea Geographer* 11, 18

and more goods and services, yet the extent to which trade may have been taken away from rural craftsmen by the towns is little understood.[91]

Within the overall equation there is a notable absence of Friday markets. Grosmont held the only Friday market found in Gwent. Meanwhile, in the lordship of Glamorgan - a de Clare lordship - Kenfig, Llantrissant and Llantwit all held markets on a Friday. The extent and complexity of the periodic system becomes more apparent when taking into account the market days of towns in neighbouring lordships, but which do not fall within the confines of Gwent. A second market in Usk is recorded as being held on a Friday during the fifteenth century.[92] It may have originated in order to address the need for a more centrally located Friday market within Gwent.

The close proximity of Wednesday markets at Trelech and Monmouth would initially seem to be at odds with the overall pattern which quite clearly conforms to the trader model of periodic marketing. The earliest reference to precise market days in Monmouth comes from the mid-fifteenth century, when markets were being held there every Wednesday and Saturday. Whether markets were held on one or both of these days prior to 1400 is open to speculation. Other settlements, notably Usk, had gained an additional market by this time. Monmouth and Trelech were located within different lordships during the Middle Ages. If both locations did indeed hold Wednesday markets in the Middle Ages, then the nature of the relationship must be considered. The first consideration should be whether the situation arose as a result of consumer demand. As it stands, the overall pattern suggests that this was not the case. The arrangement may have been conflictive, mutually beneficial or of benefit to the

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[91] It is easier to identify patterns from surviving data than other underlying issues, this is discussed in Postles, D. (2000) "Migration and Mobility in a Less Mature Economy: English Internal Migration, c.1200 - 1350", *Social History* 25, 286

[92] Courtney (1994) *op. cit.*, 138

one settlement only. If Monmouth possessed the oldest established market of the two locations, it could be speculated that the de Clares chose Wednesday as the market day for Trelech in order to keep trade, or even to bring trade in, to their lordships on that day. It would have provided a nearer Wednesday market for people who had previously travelled from places like Usk and its hinterland to Monmouth to trade.

As already noted, a third Wednesday market was held at Llanfair Discoed. Unfortunately, it cannot be conclusively proven whether all three of these Wednesday markets were operating at the same time. Llanfair Discoed is known to be a relatively late foundation (1290) but the date of reference is still earlier than that for Monmouth. When Llanfair Discoed market was established, Trelech's long established Wednesday market may have already been on the wane as the town had witnessed a substantial reduction in burgage numbers (Table 2.5).

Saturday is commonly assumed to be the most important market day. This assumption arises from the belief that local produce would have been collected during the week and traded on a Saturday with foreign merchants. In turn more exotic items would be brought into the local economy. Saturday markets were more usually held at ports so as to facilitate this process. In Monmouth, which held a Saturday market, wine was being regularly imported by boat from the 1240s.[93] In the present study area, along with Monmouth, Chepstow and Newport both held markets on a Saturday and all were prominent ports.

Elsewhere in the Gwent area, a fair is recorded as being held at Goldcliff from 1290 from the Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul (29 June) for eight days, nevertheless there is no accompanying mention of a weekly market.[94] Raglan

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[93] *Calendar of Liberate Rolls* 1240 - 45, 65

[94] The fair was still operating in 1308, see *Cal. Chart. Roll.* III, 123

possessed 68 burgages in 1354,[95] but a market does not appear in documentary sources until the late fifteenth century when a grant was made to William Herbert by Edward IV for a Thursday market.[96] This represents one example of the flurry of new markets established at various locations across south Wales in the late fifteenth century. The status of Skenfrith and White Castle as medieval boroughs is generally regarded as nebulous. It seems highly probable that Grosmont, with its twice weekly markets held on Wednesdays and Saturdays, acted as the main marketing centre for the Three Castles.

The existence of a periodic market system does not preclude permanent stallholders from existing. Indeed, within all of the settlements considered here, there would have been craftsmen and traders who would also be more or less permanent stallholders engaged in such professions as smithing, pottery production, brewing, baking, tanning and weaving. Then, as now, there would have been varying motives of those participating in the market, whether it was to engage in the process of buying, selling or both buying and selling.

The surviving documents are also far from enlightening when attempting to determine the relative success or otherwise of the market settlements. The vitality of many markets in England and Wales was on the wane prior to the arrival of the plague.[97] Early market foundations established in the lordship centres are usually found to have been the most enduring.[98] On this basis it would be expected that Abergavenny, Monmouth, Chepstow, Caerleon, Newport and Usk to have the most

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[95] PRO: SC11/970

[96] *Cal. Pat. Roll.* 1461 - 67, 425-6

[97] Masschaele (1994) *op. cit.*, 256

[98] Masschaele (1997) *op. cit.*, 175

enduring markets in the Gwent area as they were the towns that stood at the head of their respective lordships.

It is striking to note that the level of prosperity and the rapid population growth achieved in south Wales as a whole during the thirteenth century was not matched again until the agrarian and then the industrial revolutions in the eighteenth century. This is in spite of conditions being otherwise favourable for growth. The key factor that was missing in these later periods was the strong administrative structure and the military presence that the Marcher lords had provided in the Middle Ages. The dramatic rise and subsequent decline of Trelech has been directly linked to the influence of the de Clares and the policies of the family in their Welsh lordships.[99] The proliferation of rural markets and fairs that appeared in south Wales from the late fifteenth century onwards were an attempt to encourage economic activity by offering more opportunities to trade. This was a different and less successful approach than the medieval system of periodic markets which focused trade at specified times in certain places.

Prior to the Anglo-Norman conquest and colonisation south Wales was trading with the wider world. With the absence of what could be described as 'urban' centres in the pre-Conquest, period it is not unreasonable to assume that trade was taking place throughout the open country at various locales and not necessarily at a specifically designated central place. Following the Conquest, a system based around towns which drew in the producers and consumers of the wider region was introduced. This system was quite different to that which had previously existed. A similar situation, but under quite different political circumstances, occurred in Papua New Guinea. The *Maket Raun* was devised to operate in a landscape that had no formal trading structures. Its success brought a greater range of goods and services

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[99] Howell, R. (2000) "Excavations at Trelech: 1996 - 1999", *Mon. Ant.* 16, 133

into rural areas, and facilitated the more efficient re-distribution of goods enabling villagers from remote areas to get directly involved with the wider commercial system. In Gwent during the Middle Ages there was no one central authority to co-ordinate such a programme, nevertheless the Marcher lords could influence trading patterns within their own lordships and take account of existing marketing structures in neighbouring ones.

It is apparent that a commercial system based around the trader model of periodic marketing was in operation in the Gwent area during the later Middle Ages. Despite there not being no one single circuit covering the whole of the study area, several smaller circuits were identified. Often these extended beyond individual lordships. A distinct northern circuit has been proposed: it encompasses Grosmont, Crickhowell, Abergavenny, Monmouth and Ross. Within the southern portion of the study area a pattern was identified incorporating Usk, Abergavenny and Trelech, and possibly extending to Caerleon and Newport. An east/west pattern extended from Lydney, taking in Llanfair Discoed and Caerleon. Problems of topography and inland transport appear to have prevented one location from dominating the economy of the region and therefore no single town developed so as to become the obvious choice as county town for the later county of Gwent.

By no means does the concept of periodic marketing assume that all markets must be of equal importance. Periodic marketing is a very real phenomena which is often conceptualised in terms of idealised models.[100] However, such models rely on good integration and a strong element of central planning from the outset, themes that were not characteristics of the often piecemeal developments within the lordships of the southern March during the Middle Ages. Nonetheless the trader model of periodic marketing can be applied to Gwent in the Middle Ages. The patterns outlined here are

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[100] Smith, R.H.T. (1979) *op. cit.* 490

the main trading circuits that appear to have existed within and around Gwent during the Middle Ages. They reveal that travelling merchants were not restricted in terms of which lordships they operated within. It also seems that there was a fair amount of choice in terms of markets to visit.

2.6 The Markets and Fairs of South East Wales

A full list of market days for the remaining settlements within the south east Wales lordships is provided in Tables 2.8 and 2.9. This investigation details the earliest reference to the precise market day or the date of the annual fair, however the establishment of these institutions may have taken place a considerable amount of time before they first appear in the surviving documentary sources. The author has, he believes, uncovered the earliest surviving references to all market days and dates of fairs held in south Wales. Problems do, nonetheless remain as to whether all these markets and fairs were operating concurrently throughout the period under scrutiny. The lord benefited from rents and tolls collected at the weekly markets and annual fairs, as well as profits from court. In order to preserve the status of these institutions, provisions were usually made in the borough charters which formalised their existence. However, charter evidence does not always give details as to the exact market day or the dates of fairs.

It was not until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that market days and dates of fairs in some places changed from those originally mentioned in medieval charters. This occurred in many of the Gwent market towns, with Caerleon being a notable example with its market day changing from a Thursday to a Monday in the post-medieval period. There is scant evidence to determine the success or otherwise of these foundations and the evidence is at best circumstantial. Some of the available inquisitions were taken after an uprising and so variations between settlements at key periods may not be so much to do with market forces rather than which location was subject to an attack by the Welsh. The absence of evidence from the twelfth century

becomes particularly apparent from the tables. The date ranges can be quite considerable, from the earliest reference for Pembroke in 1154 to the latest for Monmouth in 1447.

Whilst it is clear that distinct patterns, in terms of market days emerge within certain lordships, consideration must also be made as to the practicalities of travelling between these market places. For example, in Breconshire a merchant could attend a Monday market at either Rubenmennith or Crickhowell, he could then head to Talgarth for the Tuesday market which would be less than twelve miles away and on to Brecon for Wednesday (*c.* 6 miles). Thursday could involve a trip to either Crickhowell again (15 miles) or Hay (15 miles from Brecon). A merchant travelling to Hay could head north to Glascwm for its Saturday market which is under nine miles away. Whereas the merchant who chose Crickhowell could head to the Saturday market at Brecon (15 miles) or Llandovery (33 miles). Walking distance is usually taken to be seven miles a day, this could be extended considerably if the merchant was on horseback or travelling in a horse drawn cart. Thus in Breconshire it would seem that a practical circuit existed that merchants could join as they saw fit. In Glamorgan there was an ecclesiastical market at Neath on a Monday, along with Cowbridge: Tuesday, Cardiff: Wednesday, Caerphilly: Thursday, Llantrissant: Friday, Llantwit: Friday, Kenfig: Friday, Kenfig: Saturday and Cardiff also on a Saturday. Curiously Kenfig is the only settlement in this investigation to have markets held on successive days of the week. There is only one Sunday market in south east Wales, recorded at Llandaff in 1205.[101] How long this market lasted is unclear. During the early thirteenth century the Church campaigned to prevent Sunday trading, this may account for the demise of the Sunday market in Llandaff. This campaign appears to have met with some success judging by the overall lack of markets being held on a

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[101] *Clark Cartae* vol. I no. 290, 292-3

Sunday. In fact it has been found that only three locations held weekly markets on this day in south Wales as a whole during the Middle Ages.

Comment on Table 2.8

It is believed that the close proximity of same day markets in Brecon and Llandovery came about as a result of consumer demand being at a level where the one did not need to take account of the other. Alternatively it could be argued that such an arrangement allowed merchants to travel between the two on the same day. Around these two locations a more periodic system appears to have operated. As will be seen at the end of chapter three the overall picture is very intriguing. Overall, there seems to have been several options open to the travelling trader. Interestingly, Rubenmennith possess the only non-urban market in Breconshire, in spite of the proliferation of fairs at other, smaller venues. Trecastle shared the same market day on Wednesday as Brecon but not Saturday for a short time in the 1290s, before its right to hold a weekly market was taken away in 1308.[102]

Comment on Table 2.9

Several possible trader model circuits are apparent, the two main circuits appearing to gravitate around the Wednesday and Saturday markets held at Swansea and Cardiff. Thus, an eastern and western Glamorgan divide can be detected with the central axis provided by the only Tuesday market in Glamorgan, held at Cowbridge which was flanked by Friday markets at Llantwit and Llantrissant.

From Table 2.10 it is apparent that Saturday was the most popular market day, but in some instances towns such as Cardiff held twice weekly markets with one of those days usually being a Saturday. Interestingly both Swansea and Cardiff held markets on Wednesdays and Saturdays during the Middle Ages. With over forty miles separating the two, they both operated outside of the direct sphere of influence of the other.

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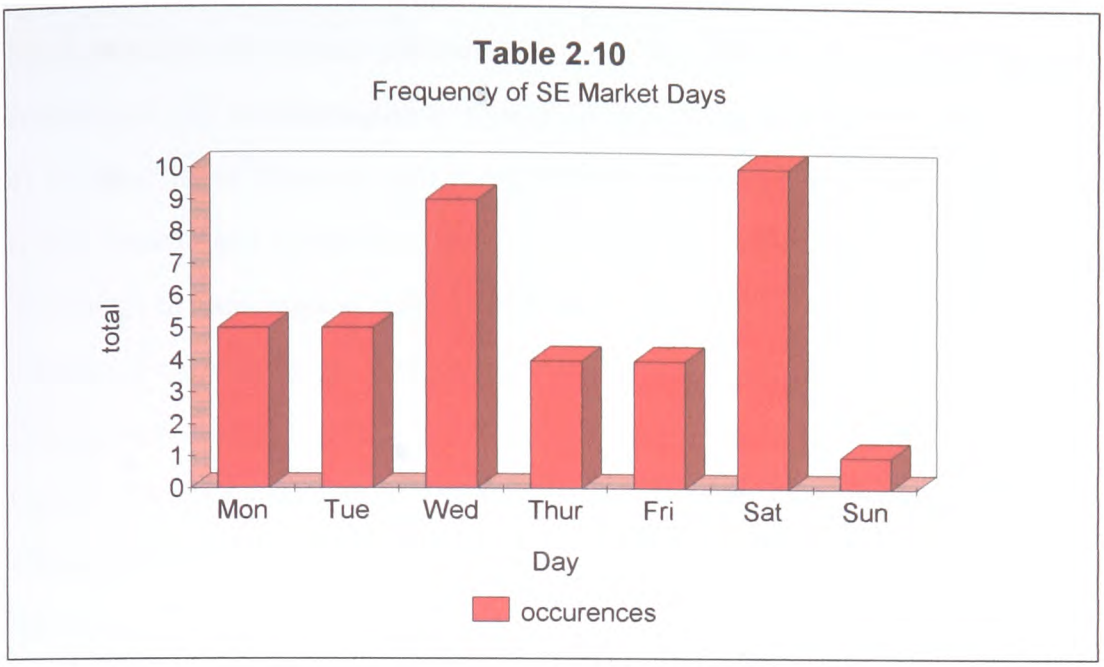
[102] *Cal. Pat Roll.* 1307 - 13, 578

Location	Market Day	Earliest Reference to Market Day	Source
Rubenmennith (manor of Brecon)	Monday	1290	PRO: C53/76
Crickhowell	Monday	1280	PRO: C53/69
Painscastle	Tuesday	1264	Cal. Chart. Rolls I, 138-40; see also PRO: C132/31
New Radnor	Tuesday	1304	PRO: C133/114/8
Talgarth	Tuesday	1316	PRO: C134/15/10
Tretower	Wednesday	1298	Cal. Chart. Roll. 1257-1300, 471
Trecastle	Wednesday	1290 -1308	PRO: C53/69
Brecon	Wednesday	1340	PRO: DL29/671/10810
Llandovery	Wednesday	1316	PRO: C134/56/3
Hay	Thursday	1316	PRO: C134/15/10
Crickhowell	Thursday	1280	PRO: C53/69
Llandovery	Saturday	1316	PRO: C134/56/3
Glascwm (a manor of Builth)	Saturday	1290	PRO: C53/76
Brecon	Saturday	1340	PRO: DL29/671/10810

Table 2.8: Market days in the Breconshire area

Location	Market Day	Earliest Reference to Market Day	Source
Llandaff	Sunday	1205	Clark Cartae II, 294
Neath	Monday	1397	PRO: SC6/1202/10
Cowbridge	Tuesday	1316	PRO: SC6/1202/9
Swansea	Wednesday	1367	PRO: C135/207/34
Cardiff	Wednesday	1314	PRO: SC6/1202/6
Caerphilly	Thursday	1306	PRO: C133/73/3
Llantrissant	Friday	1316	PRO: SC6/1202/9
Llantwit	Friday	1296	PRO: C133/77/3
Kenfig	Friday	1330	GRO: B/K 1
Kenfig	Saturday	1330	GRO: B/K 1
Swansea	Saturday	1367	PRO: C135/207/34
Cardiff	Saturday	1314	PRO: SC6/1202/6

Table 2.9: Market days in Glamorgan



2.7 The Fairs of Post-Conquest South Wales

Fernand Braudel has described the function of a fair as being to interrupt the tight circle of everyday exchanges by mobilising the economy of a large area, greater than the immediate hinterland of a settlement, and facilitating the exchange of a wide variety of goods that were not part of the necessities of everyday life.[103] The dates of annual fairs for settlements in south east Wales are set out below (Tables 2.11 - 2.16). They were compiled using a range of documentary sources. Medieval fairs were usually related to saints' days and most frequently occurred at the beginning and end of summer. Notable amongst this data is the frequency and duration of some of the fairs. Some lasted for a couple of days, whilst others went on for several weeks.

Also from the table detailing fairs is the concentration to be found in Breconshire. Here, there is a greater concentration of examples of country fairs from the late thirteenth century. Country fairs were held at Trallong, Rubenmennith, Llandew and Melynaresauey and at Glascwm near Builth. Today there is little sign of

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[103] Braudel, F. (1982) *Civilization and Capitalism 15th to 18th Century volume II The Wheels of Commerce*, 82

either Rubenmennith or Melynaresauey as both of these names are no longer in use. Rubenmennith was located around the site of the modern Rachfynydd farm in Breconshire, and Melynaresauey is a small settlement near Llandovery known today as Felindre. Rural fairs are also mentioned at Goldcliff and Llanfair Discoed in Gwent. Brecon and Llandovery, along with Swansea, were the only south Wales settlements to each possess three annual fairs. The duration for any of the fairs at Swansea is unrecorded. At Llandovery they lasted for three days each, whereas in Brecon the annual fairs lasted up to sixteen days for each fair held, which eclipses Cardiff which possessed only two fairs, one of which lasted for two weeks and the other for three days. This surely reflects the prosperity enjoyed by Brecon during the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, prosperity built on the strength of military conquest.

Details for all these fairs date from either the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. An attempt was made to identify what correlation, if any, existed between the patronal festival and the church dedication in the settlement concerned. It was found that very little direct correlation existed. In Glamorgan, Cardiff, Cowbridge, Aberafan, Caerphilly and Llandaff all possessed at least one fair that took place on the saints' day of the main church in the settlement. In the lordship of Brecon, only Brecon itself held a fair on the feast of St. John the Evangelist, which is in keeping with its church which bears the same dedication. There were no examples in Gwent. Thus, it seems that other factors were deemed more important in establishing when precisely to hold an annual fair.

Comment on Table 2.11:

In the Gwent area, Llanfair Discoed and Goldcliff are the only two recorded examples of country fairs outside of Breconshire. Llandaff is the only clear example of a non-urban fair in Glamorgan. A possible explanation for the five fairs found in Breconshire that did not take place in urban locations is that the large agricultural

Location	Dates	Duration	Earliest Reference	Source
Melynaresauey (a manor of Llandovery)	Vigil of St. Katherine (25 November)	2 days	1383	Cal. Chart. Roll. V p.281
Glascwm (a manor of Builth)	Feast of St. Martin (11 November)	5 days	1290	PRO: C53/76
Tretower	Vigil of St. Margaret (20 July)	2 days	1298	Cal. Chart. Roll. 1257-1300, 471
Llandew (Breconshire)	Vigil of the Holy Trinity (around Easter)	5 days	1290	PRO: C53/76
Rubenmennith (Breconshire)	Vigil of St. Bartholomew (24 August)	5 days	1290	PRO: C53/76
Trallong (on road from Brecon to Llandovery)	Vigil of St. Lawrence (10 August)	5 days	1290	PRO: C53/76

Table 2.11: Rural fairs in Breconshire

hinterland which is characteristic of the region was quite able to support additional fairs. Rural life was inextricably linked with 'town' life in south Wales during the Middle Ages. In Glamorgan and Gwent there were more established towns than in Breconshire, hence more trading opportunities may have been required there.

2.8 Continuity and Contrast

During the second half of the thirteenth century south east Wales experienced relative stability and unprecedented economic prosperity. Gwent and Glamorgan were under the authority of the de Clare family and Breconshire under the de Bohuns. Between these two lordships regional contrasts are apparent. The system of continuity that is evident in the area covering Gwent and Glamorgan, where several circuits which adhere to the trader model of periodic marketing can be identified, is contrasted by the situation in Breconshire where the main towns of Brecon and Llandovery have multiple market days often coinciding with each other.

Location	Dates	Duration	Earliest Reference	Source
Usk	(i) St. Luke's Day (18 October) (ii) Monday after Holy Trinity (around Easter)	N/A	1368	PRO: C136/26/4
Abergavenny	(i) Feast of the Invention (before Easter) (ii) Exaltation of the Holy Cross (14 September)	N/A	1255	PRO: SC6/1094/11
Trelech	Feast of St. Leonard (11 November)	N/A	1307	PRO: C133/130
Caerleon	(i) All Saints Day (1 November) (ii) Tuesday after Holy Trinity (around Easter)	N/A	1368	PRO: C136/26/4
Newport	Feast of St. Lawrence (9 August)	15 days	1385	NRL: CRO/C9/CJG/JJ
Llanfair Discoed	(i) Vigil of St. Simon and St. Jude (28 October); (ii) Vigil of St. Philip and St. James (1 May)	5 days each	1306	PRO: C133/127

Table 2.12: Medieval fairs in the Gwent area

Grosmont	(i) Eve of St. Michael the Archangel (29 September) (ii) Eve of Annunciation of the Virgin Mary (25 March)	N/A	1362	PRO: C135/169/3
Monmouth	(i) Feast of St. Bartholomew (24 August) (ii) Feast of St. Martin (11 November)	N/A	1256	PRO: C146/98/43; see also PRO: SC6/1094/11
Chepstow	(i) Feast of St. Peter ad Vicula (1 August) (ii) Feast of St. Michael (29 September)	N/A	1319	PRO: C145/83
Goldcliff	Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul (29 June)	8 days	1290	PRO: C133/127

Table 2.13: Medieval fairs in the Gwent area

Location	Dates	Duration	Earliest Reference	Source
Brecon	(i) Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist (24 June); (ii) Beheading of St. John (29 August); (iii) Feast of St. Leonard (6 November)	16 days: 8 leading up to the Saint's day and 8 after	1277	PRO: DL29/730/20/3 PRO: DL29/730/20/4
Hay	Feast of St. Michael (29 September)	N/A	1316	PRO: C134/15/10
New Radnor	St. Luke's Day (18 October)	N/A	1306	Cal. Chart. Roll. III, 68
Crickhowell	(i) Vigil of the Ascension (after Easter) (ii) Nativity of St. Mary (8 September)	3 days and 3 days	1280	PRO: C53/69
Llandovery	(i) Feast of St. Michael the Archangel (29 September) (ii) Monday after Pentecost (7 weeks after Easter) (iii) Vigil of St. Martin (11 November)	N/A 3 days	1316 1335	PRO: C134/56/3 Cal. Chart. Roll. IV, 350
Talgarth	Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul (29 June)	N/A	1316	PRO: C134/15/10

Table 2.14: fairs in Breconshire

Location	Dates	Duration	Earliest Reference	Source
Cardiff	(i) Nativity of St. John the Baptist (24 June); (ii) Nativity of the Blessed Virgin (8 September)	14 days and 3 days	1314	PRO: SC6/1202/6
Llandaff	(i) Feast of St. Teilo (9 Feb.); (ii) Whit Monday (7 weeks after Easter)	N/A 4 days	1205	Clark Cartae no. 289, 293
Caerphilly	Feast of St. Martin (11 November)	N/A	1306	PRO: C133/73/3
Cowbridge	(i) Feast of St. John the Baptist (24 June) (ii) Exaltation of the Holy Cross (14 September)	N/A	1281	Clark Cartae vol. 3 no. 746, 823-9; no. 886, 1050; see also 1317 PRO: SC6/1202/6
Llantrissant	Feast of St. Peter ad Vicula (1 August)	N/A	1306	PRO: C133/130, confirmed in 1346 see PRO: SC6/1202/6; also Cardiff Records, 1, 110-11
Llantwit	Feast of St. Martin (11 November)	N/A	1306	PRO: C133/130; see also SARS: DD/WO/47/1
Aberafan	(i) Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul (29 June) (ii) Feast of St. Martin (11 November)	2 Days Each	1373	Cal. Inq. Misc. 1348-77 p.387

Table 2.15: Medieval fairs in Glamorgan

Location	Dates	Duration	Earliest Reference	Source
Kenfig	(i) Vigil of St. James (24 July) (ii) Tuesday of Pentecost week (7 weeks after Easter)	8 days and 3 days	1295	GRO: B/K 1
Neath	(i)Vigil of St. Margaret (20 July) (ii) Eve of Corpus Christi (7 weeks after Easter)	3 days and 4 days	1280 and 1397	(i) Clark Cartae 4 no. 175, p. 1419; (ii) Clark Cartae 5. 1489-90
Swansea	(i) Translation of St. Thomas the Martyr (7 July) (ii) Feast of Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (15 August) (iii) Feast of St. Martin (11 November)	N/A	1367	PRO: C135/207/34

Table 2.16: Medieval fairs in Kenfig, Neath and Swansea

In Breconshire the difference is further highlighted by the proliferation of rural markets and fairs which appear, in terms of their location, to have acted as satellite trading centres to the main towns. In Gwent and Glamorgan, Llanfair Discoed and Llantwit are the only settlements holding weekly markets outside of the established towns or boroughs.

The reasons for these differences could be twofold: on first appearance the situation in Breconshire could be seen to have been brought about by consumer demand. Thus, a large rich agricultural hinterland, allied to the existence of a busy

major east/west trade route running from Hereford through Brecon and Llandovery towards Carmarthen and west Wales, created greater demand for more formal trading places. Alternatively, the existence of so many market places and the Wednesday and Saturday markets that took place in both Brecon and Llandovery could be viewed as an attempt to maximise the benefits of passing trade along the main routeway. The additional markets held at locations such as Rubenmennith may be interpreted as an attempt to stimulate trade by creating more trading opportunities. Of the two, the former seems more likely. Brecon and Llandovery possessed large agricultural hinterlands and the successful petition for Trecastle, some eleven miles away from Brecon up the Usk valley, in the late thirteenth century suggests that the additional trading centres were established as a result of consumer demand. In 1308 the rights of Trecastle as a trading centre were quashed. Its existence seems to have owed much to the economic prosperity of the latter thirteenth century, but as times changed in the early fourteenth century and the economy contracted, its rights were rescinded in order to secure those of the lordship centre at Brecon.[104]

It appears that generous trading rights were established at the outset in Breconshire. Initially these may have been established to offset the perceived disadvantage of the lordship's inland location, which was away from the coastal ports. Brecon was the head of its lordship and is located on the northern of the two major routeways into south Wales. Charters dating between 1277 and 1282 gives burgesses of Brecon extensive rights and liberties. These included control over the tolls of the town and its suburbs, as well as controlling tolls on the boundaries of the lordship at Tir Ralph, Ystradfellte, Penderyn and Penpont, providing a source of income from all non-burgesses of Brecon who passed through.[105] Grants like these were very

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[104] *Cal. Pat Roll.* 1307 - 13, 578

[105] Rees W. (1923/25) "Charters of the Boroughs of Brecon and Llandovery", *Bull. Board Celt. Stud.* 2, 245-61

generous benefits, which were no doubt designed to encourage merchants and artisans to become burgesses of Brecon. This process would act to stimulate trade within the lordship by spreading the wealth. In doing this, the burgesses were given a significant role in the running of the town. The results of such measures are attested to by the proliferation of markets and fairs found in the region, not just in Brecon and Llandovery but also in Trallong, Llandew and Rubenmennith. Breconshire possesses more examples of non-ecclesiastical country markets and fairs found in south Wales during the Middle Ages than any other lordship. Although such liberties did not go uninterrupted throughout the medieval period a foundation had been laid, upon which a level of commercial vitality was achieved. In the Breconshire area more than any other it would appear that, because of the liberties granted by the lord, the burgesses were given a prime role in commercial development.

A lord would not want to be overly generous in the granting of rights, for as burgesses enjoyed their freedoms they would inevitably wish to see those freedoms extended further. This would create the potential for conflict, especially so when later lords considered that original charters, granted by their predecessors, had been too generous. For example, in 1340 the then lord of Brecon, Humphrey of Hereford, revoked many of the liberties granted by his grandfather in the earlier charters to the annoyance of the burgesses. Bailiffs were appointed to run the administration of the town and for the next fifteen years - until the privileges were restored in 1365 - the lord yielded considerable profits as a result. It averaged £119 profit yearly from the town of Brecon alone,[106] this is quite considerable when compared with town profits from Swansea just two years later which yielded £76, 7*s.* 10*d.* for its lord.[107] In 1630 Brecon was worth a fraction of its 1365 value returning £71.[108]

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[106] PRO: DL/29/671/108/10

[107] Robinson, W.R.B. (1971) "Medieval Swansea" in Pugh, T.B. (ed.) *Glamorgan County History vol. III: The Middle Ages*, 374

[108] PRO: DL/29/671/108/10

By comparison, the burgesses of towns located in the de Clare lordships were not subject to such generous rights. However, there are recorded instances where payments to the lord were waived. In 1312 Gilbert de Clare granted traders in Caerphilly and Llantrissant freedom from tolls for seven years, in what can be viewed as a deliberate attempt to encourage economic activity and stimulate growth in these towns.[109] Prominent urban centres like Usk and Cardiff had not, by the early thirteenth century, developed by the extent to which they could dominate the economy of the region. It has been suggested by Beresford that this was because overall the transportation system was too inefficient to allow this to happen, so that Cardiff could not emulate London in the south east of England or Exeter in the south west and come to exert commercial dominance over its region.[110] These issues will be returned to later in the thesis.

2.9 Conclusion

The role of lordship was vital in the development of the south Wales economy between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. The Marcher lords provided the framework and acted as the catalyst which stimulated trade. The greatest indicator of seigneurial influence comes from the realisation that the general decline experienced in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when conditions were otherwise favourable for growth, was largely due to the lack of a strong administrative framework which the Marcher lords had provided. The proliferation in the number of markets being held and the considerable growth in the number of fairs that was experienced in the late fifteenth century and continued in the subsequent century may directly represent attempts to stimulate growth, by offering more accessible places to trade at the local level.

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[109] PRO: SC6/1202/7

[110] Beresford, M.W. (1988) *New Towns of the Middle Ages: Town Plantation in England, Wales and Gascony*, (Gloucester, Alan Sutton), 347

Prior to the Anglo-Norman conquest and colonisation south Wales was trading with the wider world. With the absence of what could be described as 'urban' centres in the pre-Conquest period it is not unreasonable to assume that trade was taking place throughout the open country at various locales and not necessarily at a specifically designated central place. Following the Conquest a system based around towns which drew in the producers and consumers of the wider region was introduced. This system was quite different to that which had previously existed. Ethnographic parallels exist and have been explored in this chapter. Examples of periodic systems were introduced into a landscape that had no formal trading structures. Their success brought a greater range of goods and services into rural areas, allowed the more efficient re-distribution of goods and got villagers from remote areas directly involved with the wider commercial system.

These new foundations threatened some of the existing centres, particularly the castle towns which had developed, and in some cases transformed, into trading boroughs. The eventual success or otherwise of these trading centres was dependent on factors such as their location in terms of trading routes and the resources and population of their respective hinterlands. Not all of them were successful, particularly those that had developed as appendages to castles. Trelech's market and fair had ceased by 1695.[111] Llantrissant and Cowbridge went into decline as new markets were established at smaller settlements in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The paucity of documentary evidence makes it difficult to assess the relative success or otherwise of these markets and fairs during the Middle Ages. Indeed, at any given point in time, notably during the crisis periods, it is questionable whether these foundations were in operation at all. They may have been suspended during times of crisis. It is also questionable as to whether some of these markets and fairs

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[111] Courtney (1994) 114

had existed by prescription only. Whilst this possibly must be considered, the evidence for the period up to 1400 suggests that, for the study period at least, the possibility must be rejected. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there is a very strong possibility that the markets and fairs detailed in the charts were operating contemporaneously. It certainly seems likely that by the end of the fifteenth century new markets and fairs were being brought into being in an attempt to stimulate trade. Without the strong administrative framework which the Marcher lords had provided, economic growth was substantially less than the levels attained during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and in some places would not rise again until the agrarian and industrial revolutions.

This chapter has examined the role of the Marcher lords on transport and trade in south east Wales between 1100 and 1400. It has discovered that trade was not restricted to boroughs and that the framework provided by the lords allowed trade to prosper with new urban centres acting to allow the more efficient re-distribution of goods. It has been revealed that models of periodic marketing do apply, specifically the trader model in the lordships contained within the bounds of Gwent and Glamorgan. In Breconshire, meanwhile, a contrast was apparent as neighbouring markets were held on the same day, and a network of rural markets and fairs existed as satellite trading centres to the main market towns. Two possible explanations were advanced in order to explain this: it was considered that such a situation may have came about as a result of consumer demand; the alternative was that extra trading places were created and same day markets held in order to maximise passing trade along a major routeway. It was concluded that a prominent highway and a rich agricultural hinterland had led to an increased consumer demand, to which the de Bohun Marcher lords had responded by establishing more trading centres. The next chapter will reconsider these issues as new light is shed on the situation with the study of markets and fairs in south west Wales. This will allow the overall situation to be analysed.

Chapter Three

The Role and Influence of Lordship on Transport and Trade

(II) South West Wales

3.1 Introduction

This, the second chapter to consider the role of lordship, will continue the themes explored in the previous chapter. As such it will focus on the impact of lordship by identifying the framework of markets and fairs, where and when they were held. After discussing the evidence for transport and trade in south west Wales this chapter will conclude by combining the information from south east Wales with that from south west Wales in order to gain a better understanding of the overall picture. The location, frequency, distribution and the success or otherwise of medieval markets and fairs will be considered. The issue of rural markets is more pressing in west Wales as there are more settlements that appear to fall into this category. Unfortunately, the quality of source material is limited. For example, there is very little documentary evidence for Llanelli during the Middle Ages, yet it is specifically referred to as a borough in several ministers' accounts that survive from 1399.[1] Llanelli is not alone in this and several examples of places where medieval markets appear to have existed, but where there is little documentary evidence, will be highlighted.

The political history of Marcher lordship in the region has been discussed in detail by, among others, R.R. Davies and R.A. Griffiths, as such it will not be dwelt upon here.[2] Table 3.1, below, provides a simplified outline of the descent of the west Wales lordships. Several lordships are omitted, for whilst it is known that they existed

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[1] PRO: DL29/573/9063,64,65

[2] Davies, R.R. (1978) *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales 1282 - 1400*; *and* (1987) *The Age of Conquest, Wales 1063-1415*; see also Griffiths, R.A. (2000) "Wales and the Marches", in Palliser, D.M. (ed.) *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* volume 1, 600 - 1540, 681 - 715

their history is little understood. Among them are the lordships of Wiston, Emlyn and Narbeth. The descent of Laugharne is also sketchy.

This chapter will consider where markets were being held in west Wales during the Middle Ages and provide a comprehensive list giving details of those markets. Evidence will be sought for trading patterns, with the models of periodic marketing borne in mind. Attention will then turn to the fairs that were held in the region. This will be followed by an analysis and discussion of the findings for south Wales as a whole.

The penultimate section will consider the medieval market settlements that are known primarily from post-medieval sources. These are settlements that were described, predominantly by sixteenth and seventeenth century commentators, like John Leland, George Owen and Richard Blome as being places where markets were once held but which have long since been 'lost'.[3] This section will examine locations mentioned by George Owen in particular that may have been, for a short time at least, medieval trading centres and consider the reasons for their demise.

3.2 The Markets of South West Wales

Tables 3.2 and 3.3 outline the locations in west Wales for which details of weekly markets are known. There are twenty seven weekly markets held at twenty two locations featured in this list, yet there may have been as many as twenty nine market locations in all operating in west Wales at various points during the Middle Ages. References to some markets consist only of the briefest mention, sometimes in post-medieval sources that attest to the former status of a certain location. Map 3.1 shows the location of medieval markets, and suspected medieval markets, principally

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[3] Miles, D. (ed.) (1994) *The Description of Pembrokeshire by George Owen of Henllys* Welsh Classics Vol. VI (Llandysul, Gomer); Toulmin-Smith, L. (1906) *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1536-1539* Vol. III, Part IV (London, Centaur Press), 63

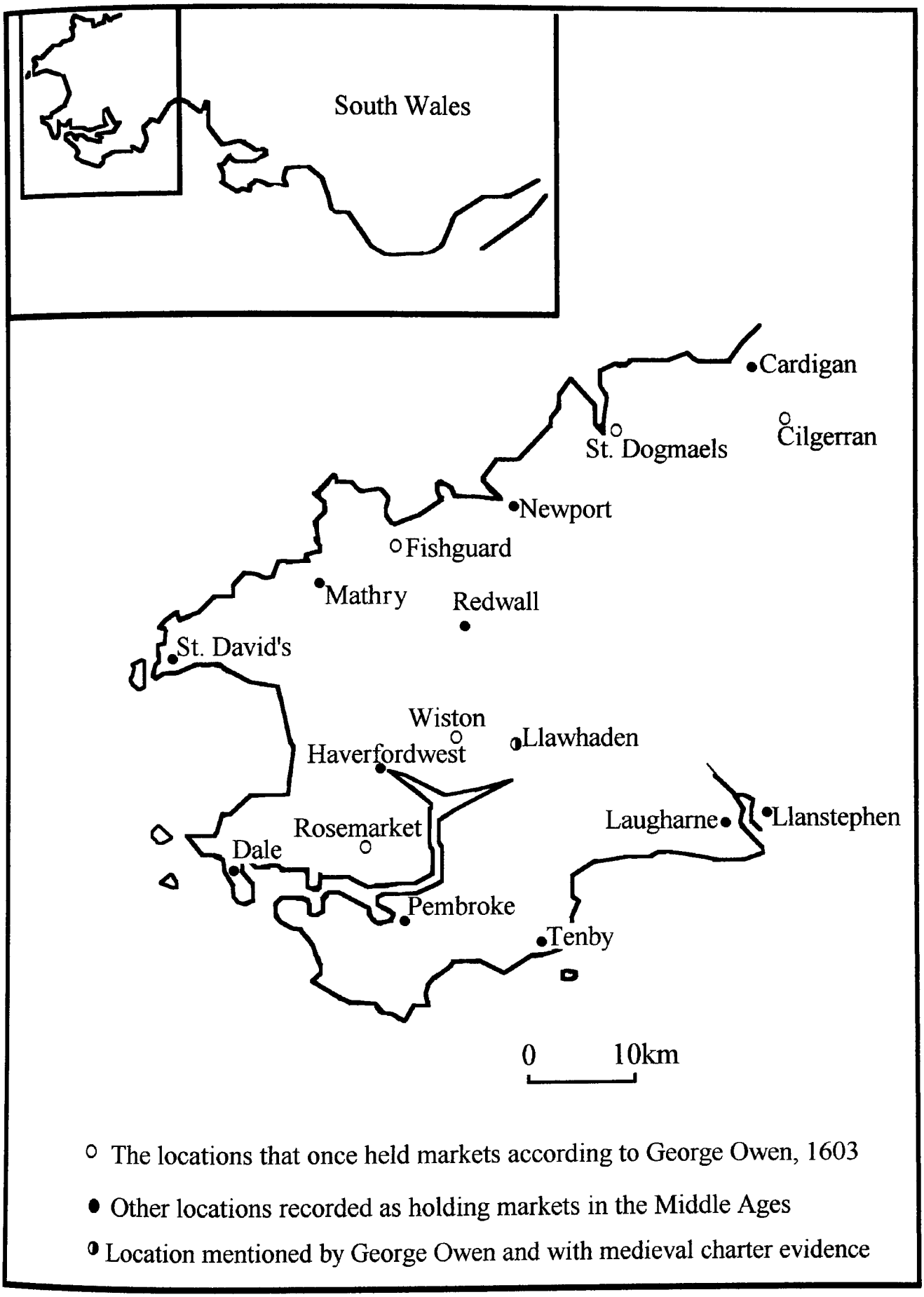
in Pembrokeshire. It distinguishes between those markets for which there is evidence of their existence in the Middle Ages and those for which there are post-medieval references to markets having existed.

Lordship	Dates	Name of Marcher Lord
Cemais:	c.1115 - 1326	Fitzmartin family
	1326 - 1392	Stafford family
	1392 -	Tuchet family
Ceredigion:	1110 - 1137	Gilbert Fitz Richard de Clare & Son
	1137 - late 1270s	Welsh control
	late 1270s -	Crown control
Cilgerran & Pembroke:	1093 - 1102	Arnulf de Montgomery
	1102 - 1138	Crown
	1138 - 1176	Gilbert Fitz Gilbert de Clare and heirs
	1189 - 1245	William Marshall & heirs
	1247 - 1324	de Valence family
	1339 - 1389	Hastings family
	1389 -	Crown
Haverford	-1245	as Pembroke
	1245-89	Bohun and Mortimer
	1289-1308	Crown
	1308-24	de Valence
	1324-	Crown
Iscennan	1282-1322	Giffard
	1322-6	Despenser
	1327-37	Crown
	1337-40	Wylington
	1340-	Lancaster
Laugharne	c.thirteenth century	Brian
Llansteffan	1100-1190	Marmion
	1190-1338	Camville
	late 1330s - to c.1380	Penres
Kidwelly	c. 1105 - c.1131	Roger, Bishop of Salisbury
	c. 1130 - 1216	Londres family
	1245 - 1283	Chaworth family
	1296 - 1361	Henry, earl of Lancaster & son
	1361 - 1399	John of Gaunt
	1399 -	Duchy of Lancaster

Table 3.1: The descent of lordships in west Wales (after R.R. Davies (1987) *The Age of Conquest*, Wales 1063-1415)

Location	Market Day	Earliest Reference to Market Day	Source
Haverford	Sunday	1207	Cal. Pembs. Rec. I 126-7
Pembroke	Sunday	1368	Cal. Pembs. Rec. III 209-10
Llawhaden	Monday	1281	Cal. Chart. Roll. II 257-8
Redwalls	Monday	1293	Cal. Chart. Roll. 1341-1417, 149
Mathry	Monday	1356	Cal. Chart. Roll. 1341-1417, 149
Tenby	Wednesday	1323	Cal. Pembs. Rec. III 222-3
Dale	Wednesday	1293	Cal. Chart. Roll. II, 433
Newport (Pembs.)	Thursday	c. 1241	Brit. Bor. Chart. p. 11 see also PRO: E179/242/48
Loughor	Thursday	1247	Cal. Chart. Roll. I. p.328; Cal. IPM. VI p.216
St. David's	Thursday	1281	PRO: E352/73
Laugharne	Friday	1280	PRO: SC6/1218/3
St. David's	Saturday	1281	PRO: E352/73

Table 3.2: Market days in Pembrokeshire



Map 3.1: Medieval markets and suspected markets in Pembrokeshire

From Table 3.2 and Map 3.1 it is interesting to note the absence of a Tuesday market and only one Saturday market, held at St. David's. In the previous chapter it was noted how Saturday is commonly assumed to have been the most important market day, and as such it would be expected that the Saturday market at St. David's would have been thriving, especially so as St. David's was positioned at one of the major crossing points to Ireland. Yet this does not appear to have been the case as by 1326, the year that the Black Book of St. David's was compiled, there was only income being received from one weekly market at St. David's, the Thursday market. Of course, it has already been pointed out that there is little or no information as to the precise market days at several locations in Pembrokeshire. So where the markets at Fishguard, Wiston, Rosemarket, and Cilgerran fitted into the picture is unclear. There is also a question mark over whether a medieval market operated within the study period at St. Dogmaels at all. Nor is it apparent as to exactly how long the markets held in these locations existed and if they operated contemporaneously with those listed above in Table 3.2.

The information utilised in compiling Table 3.2 suggests that markets were not held on each day of the week. However, there are market places for which there is little or no surviving information available which would allow them to be taken into consideration. Some of these settlements may have held weekly markets which flourished for a short time but which ultimately did not survive into later periods. Table 3.2 reveals that there was no obvious pattern of periodic marketing operating in Pembrokeshire which would allow a trader to complete a circuit of markets on successive days. However, there are several places where no information is known other than there being a strong possibility that a market was once held. These 'gaps', were they filled in, might present a somewhat different picture and indeed reveal a marketing system similar to that which existed in south east Wales.

Eleven miles separated the Sunday markets in Haverfordwest and Pembroke as well as the Milford Haven Estuary. From Pembroke a twelve mile trip could be made to the Monday market at Llawhaden, or a fifteen mile journey to the Monday market at Redwall. Alternatively, a boat trip could have taken a merchant across the Milford Haven Estuary to the Monday market held at Dale. There is no known Tuesday market nearby, although any one of the market places for which no detailed information survives in the area may have held its market on a Tuesday. The next nearest known market by road would again involve a twelve mile trip to the Wednesday market in Tenby. From here the nearest Thursday markets are all well over twenty miles away and several other market locations would be by-passed in order to get to them. Therefore the trading circuit fails as the distances become prohibitive. Thus no clear pattern can be discerned and therefore from the surviving evidence it must be assumed that each location operated independently of the others satisfying their own hinterlands and export and import markets.

However, the actual situation may not have been as clear cut as this. Several smaller circuits within the region could be predicted if the 'gaps' are filled in and a market day speculated for locations where no exact details survive. For example, one circuit may have existed in north Pembrokeshire and could have included Cardigan with its Saturday market. It would be possible to travel to a Sunday market in Cilgerran with the option of a Monday market at Llawhaden or Mathry and then three neighbouring places where a Tuesday market may have been held. A Wednesday market could have been held in St. Dogmaels which would be a natural progression to the Thursday market in Newport and, perhaps, a Friday market in Fishguard before a Saturday market in St. David's. From there, Haverfordwest was well placed with its Sunday market and a market held on Monday at Rosemarket would be ideally placed sandwiched between two Sunday markets (the other being Pembroke). However, there were known Monday markets at both Dale and Mathry and so Rosemarket may have held its market on a Tuesday. Therefore, when suggestions for market days are

made where no details as to the precise day are known, it seems that it was highly likely that a market system could have existed in the Middle Ages which allowed a trader to travel from one market to the next on successive days.

Table 3.3 details the remaining markets in the study area encompassing parts of Pembrokeshire with Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire. There appears to be more correlation here between the spread of market days which would allow a trader to move from one to the next on successive days. There is also a host of same day markets, five in fact with the greatest distance between them being the twenty one miles which separates Carmarthen from Cardigan. The shortest distance between Saturday markets is the four miles separating Dryslwyn and Llandeilo, with only a short ten mile journey to Carmarthen. Whether these nearby markets were a serious threat to the dominance of Carmarthen is quite a different matter. Dryslwyn was a very small market located in the bailey of Dryslwyn castle. It is unlikely that Dinefwr and Llandeilo were much bigger.

The possibility was considered that a system of benefit to a travelling merchant may have existed encompassing most of the locations in Table 9. However, it appears to have only incorporated some of them. Six miles separates the Monday market at Llanstephen from the Tuesday market at Kidwelly. Two options followed for the Wednesday market: Carmarthen and Dinefwr, although the size and status of the latter may have been negligible. From 1347 a second market was established at Newcastle Emlyn to supplement its existing Friday market which directly competed with a market held on the same day in Carmarthen.

In Pembrokeshire there appears to be a dearth of markets held on a Saturday. This deficiency is more than made up for in Carmarthenshire and the parts of Cardiganshire that fall within the study area. There are fewer locations for which market days within this area are not known.

Llanstephen	Monday	1378	WWHR vol. 12 113-4
Lampeter	Monday	1285	Cal. Chart. Roll. II, 303
Llandewi Brefi	Monday	1326	Black Book, 24
Tregaron	Tuesday	1292	Cal. Chart. Roll. II, 421
Kidwelly	Tuesday	1268	Cal. Chart. Roll. II, 113
Dinefwr	Wednesday	1281	PRO: SC2/215/17, see also PRO: E/101/486/13
Carmarthen	Wednesday	1280	PRO: SC6/1218/3
Newcastle Emlyn	Thursday	from 1347	PRO: SC6/1220/6
Newcastle Emlyn	Friday	1308	PRO: SC6/1218/6
Carmarthen	Friday	1280	PRO: SC6/1218/3
Cardigan	Saturday	1227	Rot. Litt. Claus. ii, 168
Carmarthen	Saturday	1280	PRO: SC6/1218/3
Dryslwyn	Saturday	1324	Cal. Chart. Roll. III, 461
Llandeilo	Saturday	1326	Black Book, 262
Kidwelly	Saturday	1268	Cal. Chart. Roll. II, 113

Table 3.3: Market days in Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire

Llanelli and St. Clears have proven elusive in the quest for documentary evidence, whilst evidence of medieval settlement is recorded at both these locations the archaeological evidence cannot be supplemented by detailed documentary

information. A short distance outside of Pembrokeshire, Lampeter held its weekly market on a Monday and a three day annual fair around the feast of St. Denys.[4]

A second possibility that was entertained was that the market system in west Wales centred around Carmarthen. This town developed rapidly in the Middle Ages and early during the reign of Edward III Carmarthen became the staple port for west Wales in order to levy customs on the surrounding district. In 1353 Carmarthen became the sole staple for Wales, although many of the markets in the region had been established long before this. Like Haverfordwest it occupied a prime location and undoubtedly occupied a strong commercial position prior to being appointed a staple port. It was also over twenty miles away from its nearest large rival, Cardigan. How closely the rules relating to staple ports were adhered to in south Wales is another matter, as in January 1349 a letter to the sheriff of Gloucester states that wool, wool fells or hides should not be taken out of the realm to the port of Chepstow or to any other part of Wales as the king had been informed that merchants were trading in wool, fells and hides, 'in no small quantity' at the town of Chepstow and at other places in Wales and by doing so these merchants were defrauding the king of customs and subsidies.[5] Merchants carrying out such activities were to be arrested and their wool forfeited to the king.[6] There seems little doubt that Carmarthen exerted a strong influence over its region, and this may be reflected in the pattern of markets that surrounds it.

3.3 The Fairs of South West Wales

There were twenty four locations holding thirty six fairs in south west Wales during the Middle Ages. These are summarised in Tables 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6. Thus it

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[4] *Cal. Chart. Roll.* III, 303

[5] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* Ed. III, 176

[6] *Ibid.* 290-1

appears that more locations were holding annual fairs than held markets. At some stage in their history, however, it is likely that markets may once have been held in places like Narbeth.[7] Perhaps at settlements like New Moat there was not enough demand to support a weekly market, but there was enough to support a large annual fair, or as in the case of New Moat, more than one fair a year. Of the other locations where market details are not known, there are often instances where the fair can be identified with more certainty than the weekly market - like New Moat - whereas at villages such as Wiston details of both remain elusive. Wiston's post-medieval fair was held on 20 October but its date of origin remains uncertain.[8] This research has been unable to identify any extant medieval documentation detailing markets and fairs held in Wiston and the main authorities on the history of Wiston are also unaware of any such evidence.[9] This is also the case for Rosemarket where there is no mention of a fair ever being held. Markets and fairs at some locations, like Fishguard, were re-founded in the eighteenth century and as such may bear little resemblance to their medieval precursors. Whilst the duration of each of the fairs listed is not known it is interesting that for those where details do survive, New Moat had the longest lasting fair covering fifteen days at the end of September running into October. The earliest recorded fair at Pembroke lasted for eight days, this was later reduced to three days by 1324.[10] It is such variations that the surviving evidence does not detail for every location. The seasonal distribution of the fairs in west Wales consists of six fairs held in June and August, four in September and October, three in November and one each in the months of April, May, July and December.

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[7] *Calendar of Pembrokeshire Records* (hereafter: *Cal. Pembs. Rec.*) II, 74-5

[8] Lewis S. (1865) *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales* subject: Wiston

[9] Lilley, K.D. (1995) *The Norman Town in Dyfed: A Preliminary Study of Urban Form* (Birmingham, Urban Morphology Research Group), 80-83; J.A. Kissock, *pers. comm.*; Ken Murphy *pers. comm.*

[10] *Cal. Pembs. Rec.* III, 83

Location	Dates	Duration	Earliest Reference	Source
Kidwelly	Feast of St. Mary Magdalen (22 July)	8 days	1268	Cal. Chart. Roll. II p.113
New Moat	(i) Feast of St. Nicholas (6 December) (ii) Michaelmas (29 September)	4 days 15 days	1290 1291	Cal. Chart. Roll. II p.343; Cal. Chart. Roll. II p.405; see also 1326 Black Book p.24
Llawhaden	(i) St. Luke's day (18 October) (ii) Feast of St. Martin (11 November)	3 days each	1281	Cal. Chart. Roll. II 257-8; see also 1326: Black Book p.24
Newport (Pembs.)	Translatio Ricardus (16 June)	N/A	1241	Brit. Bor. Chart. p. 11 see also PRO E179/242/48
Laugharne	(i) Feast of St. John (6 May) (ii) Michaelmas (29 Sept)	N/A	1280	PRO: SC6/1218/3
Dale	Exaltation of the Holy Cross (14 September)	3 days	1293	Cal. Chart. Roll. II, 433
Tenby	Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Mary (15 August)	3 days	1323	PRO: SC6/1208/5
Haverford	Vigil of the Apostles Phillip and Jacob (1 May)	N/A	1207	Cal. Pemb. Rec. I 126-7

Table 3.4: The medieval fairs of Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire (i)

Newcastle Emlyn	(i) Feast of St. Barnabas (11 June); (ii) Feast of St. Martin (11 Nov.)	N/A	1307	PRO: SC6/1218/6 see also PRO: SC6/1220/6
Lampeter	Feast of St. Denys (9 October)	3 days	1285	Cal. Chart. Roll. II, 303
Cardigan	(i) Trinity Sunday (7 weeks after Easter) (ii) Feast of the Apostles Simon and Jude (27 October)	3 days each	1227 1268	Rot. Litt. Claus. ii, 168 PRO: E 142/51
Narbeth	Feast of St. Andrew (30 November)	N/A	1282	Cal. Pembs. Rec. II 74-5
Dryslwyn	Feast of St. Bartholemew (24 August)	N/A	1300	WWMA, 71; see also 1324 Cal. Chart. Roll. III, 461
Llandeilo	Feast of St. Barnabas (11 June)	3 days	1291	Cal. Chart Roll. 1257 - 1300, 405
Loughor	Vigil of St. Michael (29 September)	3 days	1247	Cal. Chart. Roll. I. , 328
St. David's	(i) Whitsunday (Easter) (ii) Nativity of St. John the Baptist (24 June)	7days each	1281	PRO: E352/73
Pembroke	Feast of the Apostles of Peter and Paul (29 June)	8 days *reduced to 3 days by 1324	1154	Brit. Bor. Chart., Pembroke 1154 - 89, 172; see also *Cal. Pembs. Rec. III , 83

Table 3.5: The medieval fairs of Pembrokeshire (ii), with fairs from Cardigan

Location	Dates	Duration	Earliest Reference	Source
Llanstephen	(i) Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist (24 June) (ii) Feast of St. Denys (9 October)	N/A	1378	WWHR vol. 12 113-4
Redwalls	Translatio Edwardus (13 October)	3 days	1293	Cal. Chart. Roll. 1341-1417, 149
Mathry	(i) Michaelmas (29 September) (ii) Feast of St. Martin (11 November)	3 days	1356	Cal. Chart. Roll. 1341-1417, 149
Ystrad Meurig	Feast of John the Baptist (24 June)	3 days	1290	WWMA, 74
Llanteifi	Decollation of St. John (29 August)	6 days	1290	Cal. Chart. Roll. II p.343
Carmarthen	(i) St. Peter's day (1 Aug.) and after 1299: (ii) St. George's day (23 April)	7 days each	1280 and 1299	PRO: SC6/1218/3 see also WWMA p.69, p.89
Dinefwr	(i) Feast of St. Bartholomew (24 August) (ii) Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary (8 September) (iii) Feast of St. John the Baptist (29 August) (iv) St. Luke's Day (18 October)	4 days 3 days each	1281 1298 and from 1300 additionally from 1363	PRO: SC2/215/17 PRO: E101/486/13 WWMA 71, 89 PRO: SC6/1158/10

Table 3.6: The fairs of Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire (iii)

3.4 The 'Lost Market' Settlements of Pembrokeshire[11]

In his *Description of Pembrokeshire*, first published in 1603, George Owen lists markets as having been formerly held at Rosemarket, along with Wiston, Cilgerran, Fishguard, St. Dogmael's and Llawhaden (shown in Map 3.1).[12] This source was compiled in the sixteenth century, thus it could be speculated that these markets were medieval in origin. In the previous chapter, dealing with markets in south east Wales, it was shown that in the late fifteenth century a flurry of new markets was established across Gwent and Glamorgan at a range of rural locations. It was argued that this was done to create more places to trade almost as an act of desperation to encourage economic growth, and that many of these new markets were unsuccessful. Therefore, it could well be that these 'lost markets' that Owen described are further examples of this phenomena in Pembrokeshire. Alternatively, some of the markets may, like other Pembrokeshire markets, date to as early as the twelfth century. This section of the thesis will seek to establish whether these places held markets in the Middle Ages.

Some of the locations in Owen's list have been subject to consideration by other researchers. Two of the places, Llawhaden and Wiston, were included in Maurice Beresford's gazetteer of medieval 'new towns.' The present study has the explicit aim of studying the evidence for medieval markets, the earlier research was undertaken with different research objectives. Aside from Beresford's work, J.A. Kissock examined Wiston, Cilgerran, and Llawhaden for his study of village origins.[13] K.D. Lilley was concerned with plan analysis when he investigated Cilgerran and Wiston.[14] K. Murphy, meanwhile, sought to place archaeological

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[11] The term 'lost market' was first used by John Leland in 1538 and it seems apt to use the same term to describe the former market villages identified by George Owen.

[12] Miles, D. (ed.) (1994) *The Description of Pembrokeshire by George Owen of Henllys*, 143

[13] Kissock (1991), (1997)

[14] Lilley (1995)

evidence in the context of topographical development, and did so for Llawhaden and Wiston.[15] Whilst Ian Soulsby included some Pembrokeshire settlements in his gazetteer of Welsh medieval towns, among them was Fishguard.[16] In fact, of the six locations in Owen's list only Rosemarket and St. Dogmaels appear to have been over-looked in earlier research. Consequently, greater emphasis was placed on attempting to find information for these two settlements, whilst reconsidering the evidence for the other four places.

The first village that will be considered is Rosemarket. This village attracted the attention of the antiquarian John Leland who, writing in the late 1530s, described it thus:

> 'Rhos market. The market is lost, and (it) is now a poore village.
> It is as in the middle way bitwixt Arford west and Penbrok'[17]

The contemporary place-name appears to be a derivation of the location name - Rhos - added to the Norman-French word for market, *marche*. The modern village is located approximately six miles from Pembroke and five and a half miles from Haverfordwest, albeit with the physical divide of Milford Haven estuary separating Rosemarket and Pembroke. The location of the village in relation to two medieval coastal boroughs, on one of the principal old routeways between the two, argues strongly for a medieval origin for the modern village. The clearest indication that a market existed here is undoubtedly in the place-name. Despite this, little else was known as to when this market existed, or as to its success or otherwise.

Earlier studies of villages in Pembrokeshire have advocated an

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[15] Murphy (1997)

[16] Soulsby (1983), 134

[17] Toulmin-Smith, L. (1906) *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1536-1539* Vol. III, 63

inter-disciplinary approach, combining plan analysis alongside documentary research and archaeological evidence. Both Kissock and Murphy have employed these methods in studies of Pembrokeshire villages.[18] Hence, it was decided to undertake an inter-disciplinary study of Rosemarket as the village had not been subject to consideration in any of the earlier research.

Early historical evidence as to the status of Rosemarket in the Middle Ages is limited. The village of Rosemarket was granted to the Knights Hospitaller by Richard, son of Tancard, the Flemish *locator* or settlement founder who founded Tancredston in the mid-twelfth century. The date of the grant in not known but it is presumed to be from the period 1140-60.[19] The 'market of Rhos' is mentioned in an account of Hospitaller possessions from 1308 which transcribes details of properties held by the order in the mid-twelfth century.[20] It is here that the place-name *Rosmarche* appears in its earliest context.

Rosmarche is mentioned in a petition from the period 1296 - 1307 issued by Joan de Valence, adopting the title 'Lady of Haverford' to the king.[21] Joan held custody of the neighbouring lordship of Pembroke and in this petition claimed jurisdiction over Haverford lordship, which included Rosemarket. This claim had arisen due to the fact that the lordship of Haverford had been administered by Pembroke during the period of transition following the death of Humphrey de Bohun in 1265. This claim was unsuccessful, as in 1273 the lordship officially became administered by the Crown. In 1290 de Valence claims on the lordship were revived,

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[18] Kissock, J.A. (1997) *op. cit.* 123 - 137; Murphy, K. (1997) *op. cit.*, 139-56

[19] Rees, W. (1947) *A History of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in Wales and on the Welsh Border*, 26

[20] Charles, B.G. (1947/8) "The Records of Slebech," *National Library of Wales Journal* V, III, 180

[21] The precise date is not known

perhaps as an opportunist measure following the death of Queen Eleanor that year, but yet again proved unsuccessful.[22] The de Valence family eventually gained the lordship of Haverford in 1308. Whilst the village itself is named in the petition, a market is not alluded to and may well have ceased to exist by this time. It had certainly done so by 1338 when Hospitaller records reveal that profits from Rosemarket were derived from a watermill, a fulling mill and the glebe, with there being no mention of income derived from a market.[23] Thus, it must be assumed that the market had been discontinued by this time.

Turning to the village, the basic outline on the tithe map can be assumed to represent the medieval plan of the village (see Map 3.2). The plan consists of two main streets flanking a centrally located market square. Plots are evident running the full length of the village on its eastern side, and also on two contained pieces of land to the north and south of the market square. Two plots in the village are described by the term 'burgage' on the tithe schedule, though only one of these occurs in the pattern that has just been described. The other is situated as a solitary plot to the east of Rosemarket Rath - a prehistoric enclosure located in a field known locally as meadow ring - on the third main road in the village which runs on a different axis to the two main streets, in an easterly direction. Medieval features within the village include the manor house, a water mill, a fulling mill, and a holy well,[24] as well as the basic plan of the village itself which it seems remains essentially the same with its

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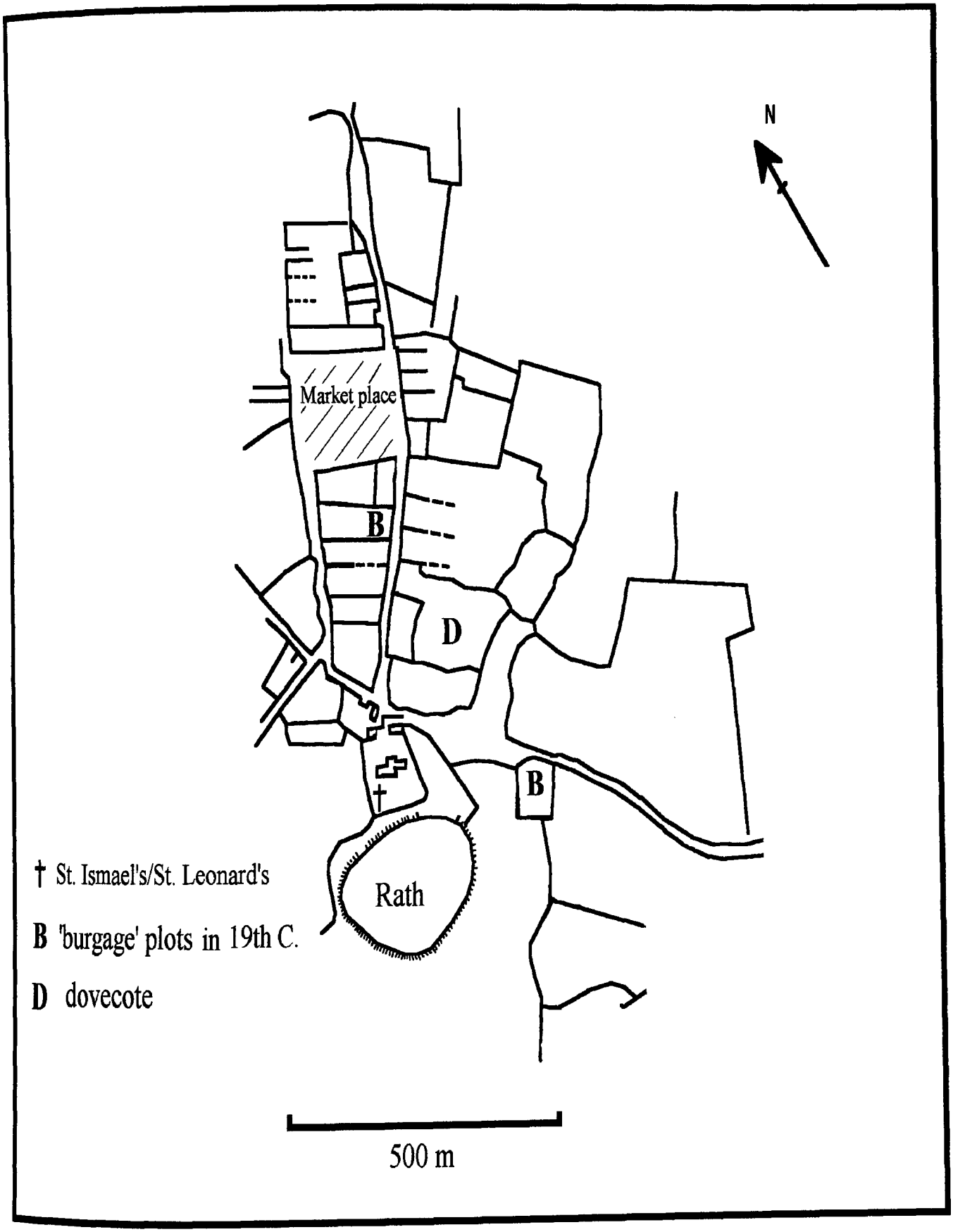
[22] Rees, W. (ed.) (1975) *Calendar of Ancient Petitions Relating to Wales* (hereafter *Cal. Anc. Pet.*) Board of Celtic Studies History and Law Series No. 28 (Cardiff, University of Wales Press), 252, no. 151

[23] Larking L.B. (ed.) (1857) *The Knights Hospitaller in England,* Camden Society 65, (London, Camden Society), 34-35

[24] Archaeoleg Cambria Archaeology SMR. Only two features within the village, the Iron Age Hillfort and the medieval dovecote are scheduled ancient monuments.



Map 3.2: A possible plan of twelfth century Rosemarket

central market place. The market survives as a distinct topographical feature despite there being no record of a subsequent market ever being held there.

Given the evidence outlined above, the possibility should be entertained that Rosemarket is a village that was first laid out as a planned settlement in the twelfth century possibly by the Flemish *locator* Tancard. Since his arrival in Pembrokeshire early in the twelfth century, Tancard had risen to become a powerful magnate. Rosemarket remained in Tancard's family until it was granted to the Knights Hospitaller in the mid-twelfth century. The Hospitallers later acquired substantial property and land in and around Haverfordwest and these acquisitions may have sounded the death knell for the market that was being held at Rosemarket. Tancard disappears from the historical record in Pembrokeshire in 1130 when his son succeeded him as *castellan* of Haverfordwest. Perhaps it is purely coincidental but it happens to be at the same time that Wizo, the founder of Wiston, also disappears from Pembrokeshire. Different commentators - considering each separately - have suggested that both men died at around this time, however, men by the name of Wizo and Tancard were founding villages in Scotland in the 1150s and as these personal names were exceptionally rare during the period there is a very strong possibility that neither had died, but had instead moved on to exploit opportunities elsewhere.[25]

Many of the smaller markets of south Wales had ceased in the early fourteenth century, it is not known if the market at Rosemarket was one of them. Given Hospitaller interests in nearby Haverfordwest it may have been extinguished much earlier. The first charter to Haverfordwest was granted by William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke *c.*1200. The extent of any settlement existing before this time is not known, what is known is that Haverfordwest became a chartered borough a considerable time

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[25] Toorians has assumed that Wizo must have died in 1130, see Toorians, L. (1990) "Wizo Flandrensis and the Flemish Settlement in Pembrokeshire," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*; whilst William Rees says the same about Tancard, see: Rees, W. (1947) *A History of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in Wales*, 26. A consideration of the careers of Wizo and Tancard as *locatores* can be found in Kissock (1997), 131 who questions the view expressed by Toorians.

after Rosemarket had been established. Haverfordwest became the *caput* of its lordship and was well placed at the lowest bridging point of the Western Cleddau to exploit commercial opportunities both by land and sea. It was this strategic advantage in terms of commercial opportunities and also, significantly, in terms of defence which saw the town expand rapidly. As stated, the exact date of the ending of the weekly market in Rosemarket is not known, however the growth of Haverfordwest, and in particular Hospitaller interests there, may have proved significant in its demise. Haverfordwest may have developed to the extent where it 'achieved' borough status, where Rosemarket failed to do so. Things may have been very different had Rosemarket occupied the more optimum location. As it was, Haverfordwest was well served by land routes but more importantly by its position at the furthest navigable point inland of the Milford Haven estuary.

The medieval history of Pembroke can be pushed back one hundred years further than Haverfordwest. It received its first charter *c.*1100 when a grant was made by Henry I to Arnulf de Montgomery, the son of Earl Roger of Shrewsbury.[26] The town was, therefore, developing at the same time as Rosemarket, however the substantial barrier of Milford Haven Estuary separated the two and allowed both to exist serving separate hinterlands. The regional commercial dominance of Haverfordwest and Pembroke undoubtedly played a role in influencing its demise. Nonetheless the village of Rosemarket remained in Hospitaller hands from the twelfth century until the Reformation, with the existence of its former market preserved in the place-name to this day.

The second of George Owen's lost market villages is Fishguard. Like many other settlements in west Wales, Fishguard is poorly served in terms of surviving documentation. However, there are several medieval features within the settlement,

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[26] *Cal. Pembs. Rec.* III, 208-10

notably the church, St. Mary's. Also of interest is the place-name itself, *Fissigarth*, which first appears in the twelfth century.[27] Beyond this, detailed evidence is lacking. Nonetheless, the tithe map of Fishguard is extremely tantalising as it features regular row plots running along either side of the High Street (Map 3.3).[28] These were described as burgages in the sixteenth century when Fishguard was also considered to be a borough. At the time of the tithe survey there were as many as 90 plots in the immediate settlement. Surrounding the settlement were large areas of open fields, little trace of which survives today. Within the centre of the Fishguard, clearly apparent on the tithe map, is a triangular market place. Thus, whilst detailed documentary evidence is lacking, there is a very strong possibility that Fishguard was a medieval market centre, possibly from the twelfth century onwards. Like other Pembrokeshire settlements it was probably laid out as a planned settlement at this time. There is some circumstantial documentary evidence to support the view that there was a community of some sort at Fishguard. A 1290 confirmation of a grant of land in Fishguard to the Tironian monks of St. Dogmaels, and which incidentally lists one 'Tancard de Hospitaller, sheriff' as witness, may represent a monastic order establishing an economic interest in a nearby commercial centre as the result of a gift from a wealthy benefactor,[29] an act that was not uncommon in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Given that Tancard disappears from records relating to Pembrokeshire *c.*1130 the original grant must pre-date this, yet the precise date of the grant remains unknown. Fishguard experienced some growth in the eighteenth century when its market was revived and held on a Thursday with fairs on 5 February, Easter Monday and Whit Monday.[30]

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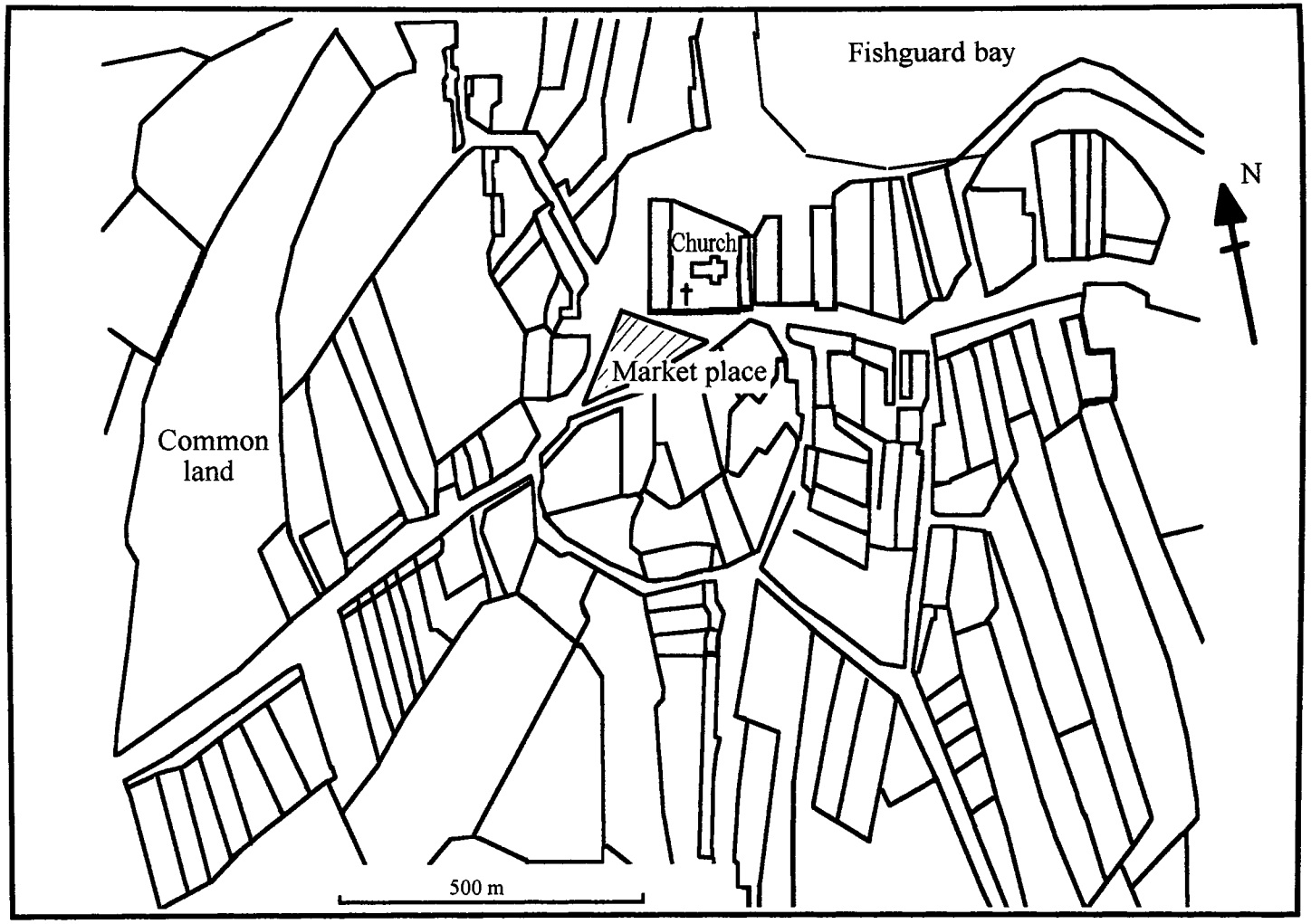
[27] Charles, B.G. (1992) *The Place-Names of Pembrokeshire* vol. I, 50

[28] NLW tithe map and apportionment, Fishguard 1842

[29] *Cal. Chart. Roll.* vol. II 1257-1300, 573

[30] Lewis S. (1865) *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales* subject: Fishguard



Map 3.3: Plan of Fishguard, from the tithe map

St. Dogmaels is also poorly documented and this may, in part, reflect the position of both Fishguard and St. Dogmaels in the turbulent north of the county of Pembroke. St. Dogmaels was subject to one of the last recorded Viking raids in west Wales which was carried out in 1138. It had been regularly visited by Scandinavian marauders since at least 987.[31] A Tironian abbey was formally established on the site of a pre-Conquest *clas* church at St. Dogmaels on 10 September 1120 by Fulchard, its first abbot. The grant of land for the abbey had been made by the fitzMartin family who brought thirteen monks over from Tiron to populate the new establishment that year. Determining when the market at St. Dogmaels existed, however, has proven to be an elusive task. The *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* of 1291 provides information on the holdings of the abbey at that time but there is no mention of a market among its possessions.[32] Unfortunately little is known of the Tironian presence in south Wales as a whole, and it must be assumed that the decline in monastic influence on commercial society in the fourteenth century put paid to their economic interests in both Fishguard and St. Dogmaels. Early plans of St. Dogmaels do, intriguingly, show an open area just outside the churchyard where a market may have once been held, Map 3.4.

Kissock has described Llawhaden as an example of a medieval rural borough: a settlement with a civic constitution but with a predominantly agricultural economy. He adds that there were no weekly markets which denied them the opportunity to participate in long distance trade.[33] Llawhaden is cited as an example of a rural borough based largely on the account of the *Black Book of St. David's*.[34] This source only lists one market as being held in 1326, every Thursday

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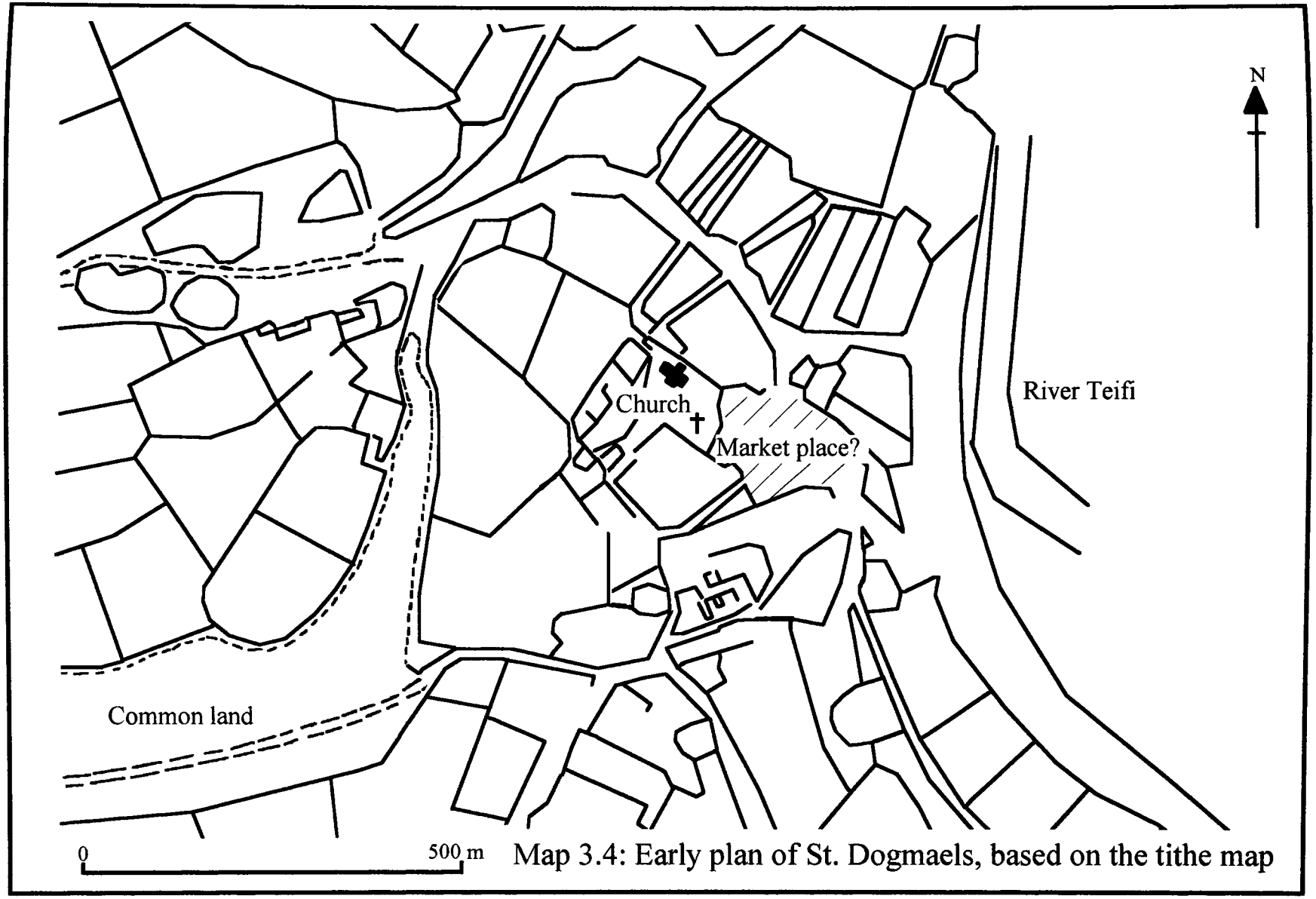
[31] Davies, R.R. (1987) *The Age of Conquest*, 10

[32] *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*, 276-7

[33] Kissock, J.A. (1997) "'God Made Nature and Men Made Towns', 132

[34] British Museum Additional MSS. No. 34,125 printed as Willis-Bund J.W. (ed.) (1902) *The Black Book of St. David's*



Map 3.4: Early plan of St. Dogmaels, based on the tithe map

at St. David's.[35] However, given that the source used is comparatively late, the market held at Llawhaden may have shared the fate of many of the smaller markets held across south Wales by that time and ceased to exist. Indeed, the sole market at St. David's is listed by the *Black Book* as being a Thursday market, yet in 1281 there were two weekly markets held there with the second taking place on a Saturday.[36] A Monday market is recorded as being granted to Llawhaden in 1281, yet it too was not mentioned in the 1326 survey.[37] This has led Kissock to doubt whether this market ever existed and to speculate that despite a grant being made it never actually functioned.[38] At the time of the 1326 survey Llawhaden was quite a sizeable settlement given the overall contraction experienced by many settlements during the period. The *Black Book* reveals that there were 174½ burgages there in 1326.[39] R.A. Griffiths has shown that other settlements in south west Wales did not have to be especially large or distanced from other trading settlements in order to maintain functioning markets during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Using the examples of Llandeilo Fawr and Dinefwr in Carmarthenshire, located within two miles of each other, Griffiths has shown that from 1280 to the 1320s each location managed to maintain a functioning market and fair.[40] Neither location was especially large at this time: Llandeilo Fawr received rent from just 14 burgesses in 1326, whilst Dinefwr may have held as many as 70 burgage plots in 1302.[41] If nearby Dryslwyn,

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[35] *Ibid.*, 24

[36] PRO: E352/73/1

[37] *Cal. Chart. Roll.* II, 257-8

[38] J.A. Kissock, *personal communication*; in 1997 Kissock wrote, "In Llawhaden there were 174½ burgage plots . . .the holder of the burgage was required to spend one day a year ploughing for the lord . . . the lord did not have the right to a market here either. As at New Moat, the only local trading opportunity were the two fairs which were held ever year" Kissock (1997) 132

[39] *Black Book*, xvii

[40] Griffiths, R.A. (1994) "A Tale of Two Towns: Llandeilo fawr and Dinefwr in the Middle Ages" in *Idem.* (ed.) *Conquerors and Conquered in Medieval Wales*, 266-7

[41] Soulsby (1983), 127

four miles west of Llandeilo, also a late thirteenth century foundation, is added to the equation this makes three settlements holding weekly markets within a four mile radius of each other, two of which were holding markets on the same day: Saturday. Each seemingly maintained the ability to sustain a weekly market and annual fairs. Dryslwyn held 43 burgages at the close of the thirteenth century.[42] Each of these settlements was smaller than Llawhaden, yet each location possessed functioning weekly markets in the late thirteenth century that continued into the early fourteenth century but did not continue much beyond that.

Cilgerran has historically been considered a borough, but this is by tradition only, as contemporary documentation attesting to its status in the Middle Ages no longer survives. Early Pembrokeshire historians have suggested that settlement may have existed here at the time of incursions into west Wales led by Roger, earl of Shrewsbury, in the early 1090s. In 1164 Cilgerran castle was captured by Rhys ap Grufudd who resisted subsequent attempts by both Norman and Flemish armies to retrieve it. Cilgerran eventually returned to Norman control following a successful campaign that was swiftly executed by William Marshall in 1204. Within ten years Cilgerran had been recaptured by the Welsh and remained under their control until 1223 when William Marshall the younger landed a force at St. David's from Ireland. The development of Cilgerran in the medieval and later periods may well have been impeded by the growth of Cardigan just over two miles to the south east. Cardigan became a prosperous trading centre in the late thirteenth century, being fostered as a royal town for west Wales under Henry III from 1268. It continued as a favoured royal town well into the reign of Edward III. One interesting reference to a complaint from the 1270s concerns Cilgerran's fisheries on the River Teifi which were impeding river transport to the town of Cardigan.[43] At least six of these were located below the

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[42] *Cal. Chart. Roll.* III, 461

[43] NLW: Bettisfield MS. 1306

castle. Specifically, boats carrying timber and stone to Cardigan castle were being obstructed and it was ordered that the fish-traps be removed, or else destroyed. They were rebuilt in 1314 by John de Hastings who ensured that they did not interfere with shipping. Aside from its status as a fishing community, little else is known of the economy of medieval Cilgerran and no accounts survive which mention a market. In spite of this, topographically there is a market area beyond the castle and the tithe map shows regular-row plots flanking a main street (Map 3.5).

Wiston is one of the more widely studied of the Pembrokeshire villages.[44] Despite this, there is much that remains a mystery as to its early development. Located four miles north east of Haverfordwest, Wiston was founded sometime prior to 1130. Today the settlement consists of a group of farms spread out from what was the medieval core of the castle, manor house and church. The settlement takes its name from the Flemish settler Wizo. No documentary evidence could be traced which could ascertain the existence of a functioning market at Wiston in the Middle Ages. Its existence as a medieval borough is implied from post-medieval references to borough status and the rights of its burgesses. In the post-medieval period there was no weekly market held at Wiston, an annual fair was recorded as being held around 20 October.[45] In his study of Wiston, K. Murphy has extrapolated a potentially quite large settlement based on archaeological evidence. His plan provides for a market place and is shown in Map 3.6.[46]

Having presented the information detailing when and where markets were held, the following section will analyse the findings. It will discuss their significance and represent cartographically the information obtained.

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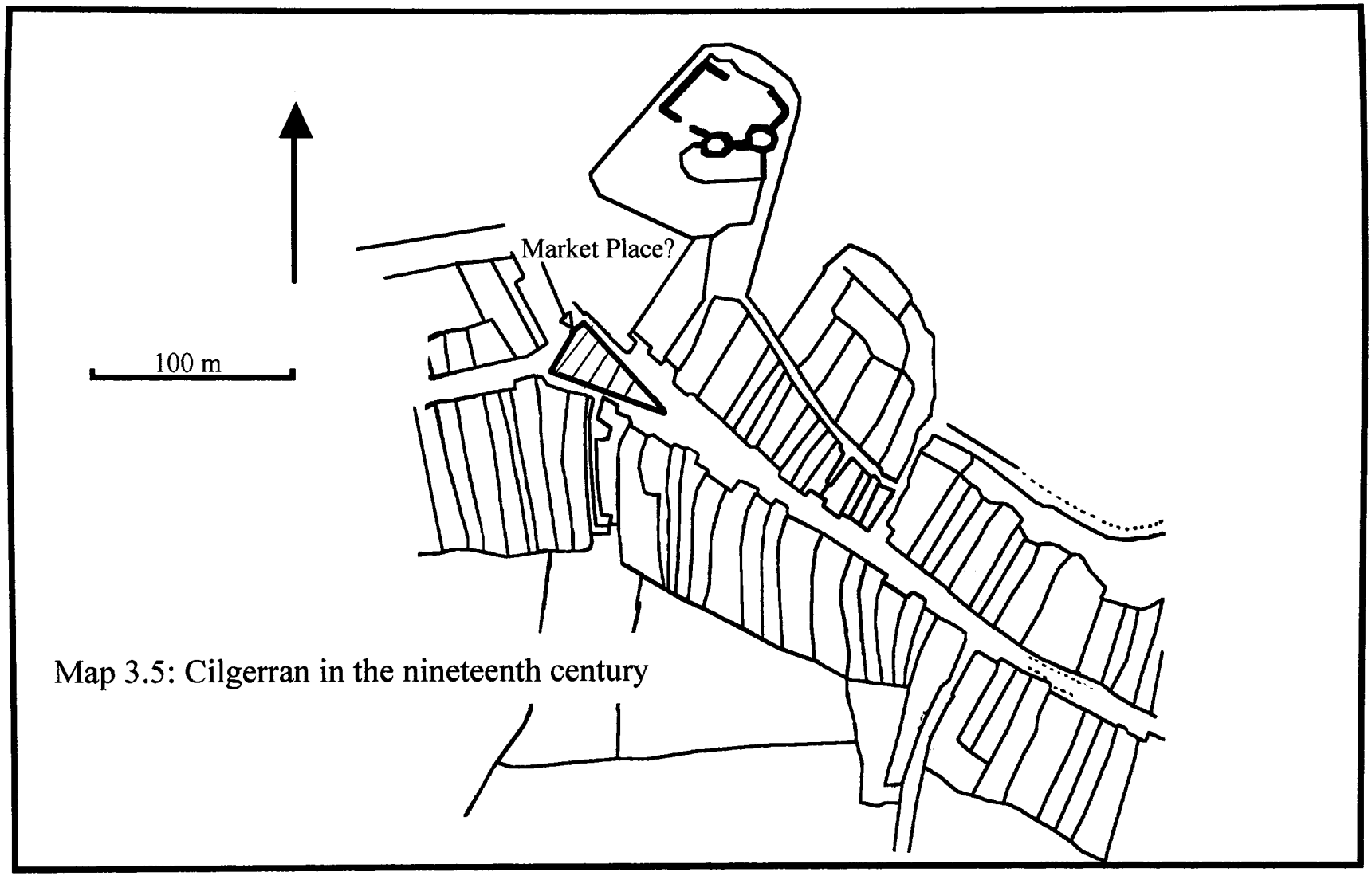
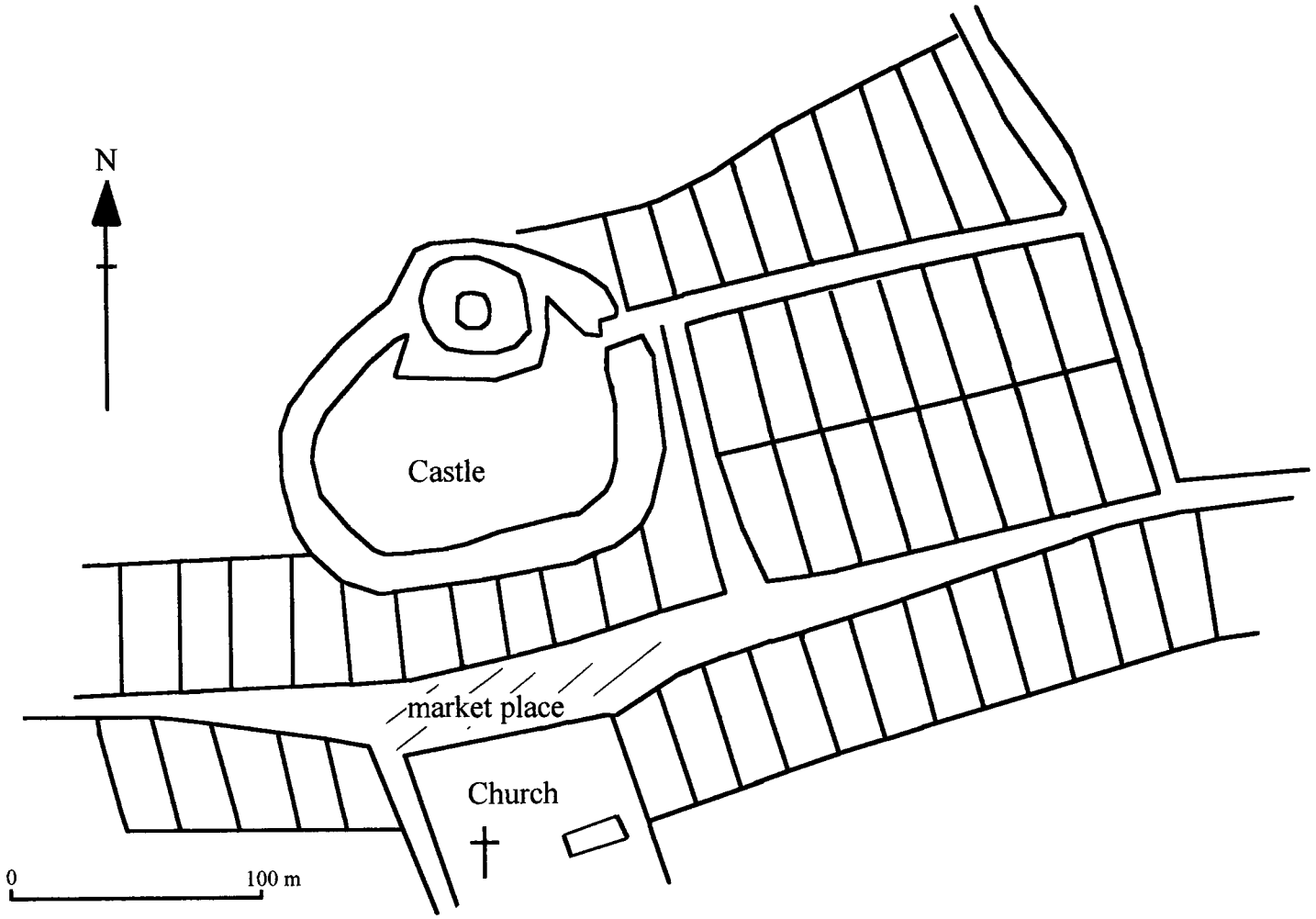
[44] It has been examined by Kissock (1997), Murphy (1995 & 1997) and Lilley (1995)

[45] Lewis S. (1865) *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales* subject: Wiston

[46] Murphy, K. (1995) "The Castle and Borough of Wiston, Pembrokeshire", *Arch. Camb.* 144, 94



Map 3.5: Cilgerran in the nineteenth century



Map 3.6: Hypothetical plan of thirteenth century Wiston (after Murphy 1995)

3.5 The Markets and Fairs of South Wales 1100 - 1400

This chapter has provided new information on the markets and fairs of west Wales in the Middle Ages. Like the previous chapter, it has brought forward information on when and where markets and fairs were held, using a range of primary sources both published and unpublished. In south east Wales (notably in Glamorgan and Gwent, stretching across the border with England) the market centres were greater in number and generally larger in the thirteenth century. A clear trading pattern had developed which allowed a trader to complete a circuit of markets. In Breconshire the situation differed slightly but not greatly. In Breconshire there were more rural markets and fairs, institutions that were held at locations where burgage totals numbered significantly less than one hundred. In west Wales, and particularly the counties of Carmarthenshire, Cardiganshire and Pembrokeshire, clear trading patterns are less easily discernible. The records for settlements also tend to be even more scarce, consequently little is known about the medieval history of places like Fishguard, Narbeth, Cilgerran and St. Clears.

The available evidence does not suggest that a developed commercial system existed in the west in a similar way to other parts of south Wales. However that does not mean that one never existed. It seems that many of the commercial centres existed independently from the others and those that did not occupy optimum locations fell by the wayside. One way around this in order to keep some semblance of commercial life in a village was through holding regular fairs. Subsequently, rural places like New Moat held more frequent annual fairs which lasted for a greater duration than urban locations such as Pembroke and Haverfordwest.

The issue of whether a particular settlement held borough status is not always clear. It cannot be assumed that the presence of a market in the Middle Ages also meant that the place concerned was a borough. If the issue of borough status is set aside, then there were sixty one locations holding markets in south Wales at some

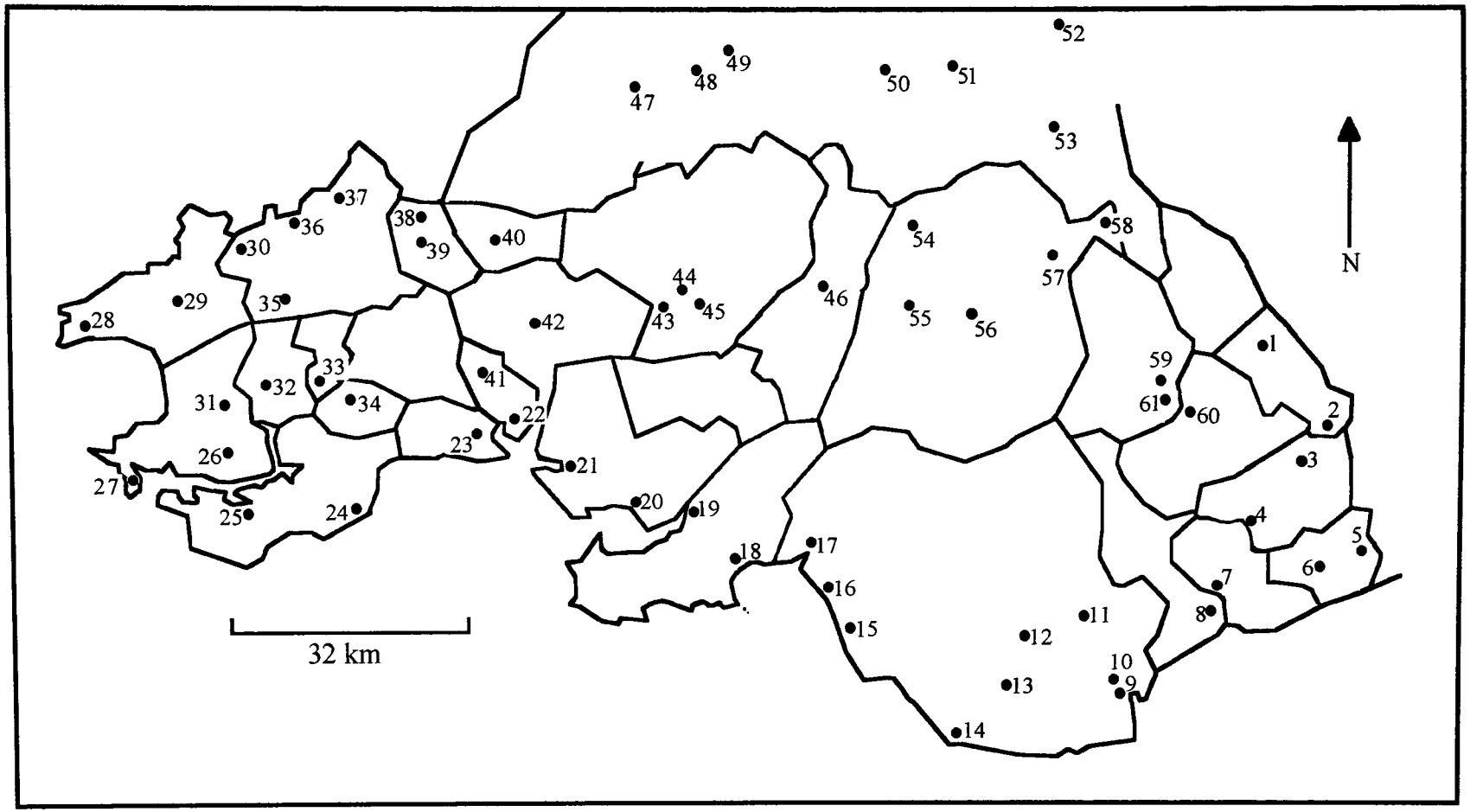
point during the Middle Ages which may or may not have been considered boroughs. These are set out below:

Table 3.7: The 61 locations that may have held weekly markets in south Wales during the study period, shown in Map 3.7:

1: Grosmont	11: Caerphilly	21: Kidwelly	
2: Monmouth	12: Llantrissant	22: Llanstephen	
3: Trelech	13: Cowbridge	23: Laugharne	
4: Usk	14: Llantwit	24: Tenby	
5: Chepstow	15: Kenfig	25: Pembroke	
6: Llanfair Discoed	16: Aberafan	26: Rosemarket	
7: Caerleon	17: Neath	27: Dale	
8: Newport	18: Swansea	28: St. David's	
9: Cardiff	19: Loughor	29: Mathry	
10: Llandaff	20: Llanelli	30: Fishguard	
31: Haverfordwest	41: St. Clears	51: Glascwm	
32: Wiston	42: Carmarthen	52: New Radnor	
33: Llawhaden	43: Dryslwyn	53: Painscastle	
34: Narbeth	44: Dinefwr	54: Rubenmennith	
35: Redwall	45: Llandeilo	55: Trecastle	
36: Newport	46: Llandovery	56: Brecon	
37: St. Dogmaels	47: Lampeter	57: Talgarth	
38: Cilgerran	48: Llandewi Brefi	58: Hay on Wye	
39: Cardigan	49: Tregaron	59: Crickhowell	
40: Newcastle Emlyn	50: Builth	60: Abergavenny	61: Tretower

The issue of market density has been examined by Farmer who examined the market ratio over one hundred square miles.[47] Farmer looked at twenty one counties, all of which were in England. The findings from this research allow the counties of south Wales to be compared to those in Farmer's list. Overall, the south Wales counties would be at the bottom of the list of twenty one places in the number of markets per one hundred square miles. By this measure there is no greater

[47] Farmer, D.L. (1991) "Marketing the Produce of the Countryside, 1200-1500" in Miller, E. (ed.) *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, III: 1348-1500,* 331



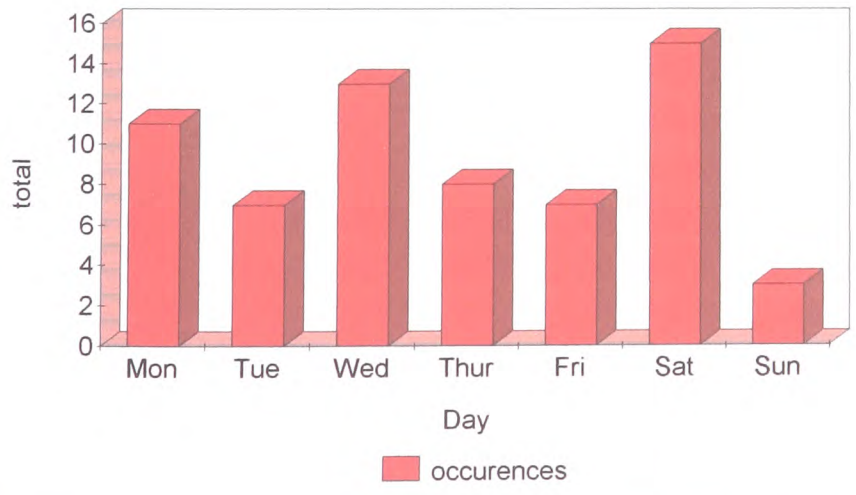
Map 3.7: Suspected and known market locations in south Wales

density of markets in any of the regions of south Wales or in, indeed, in Wales as a whole, than the counties listed by Farmer. For example, the market density in Bedfordshire is 4.65 markets/100sq.miles. In a comparable Welsh county, like Gwent, the ratio is just 1.69 markets/100sq.miles. Glamorgan is only slightly larger than Buckinghamshire, yet the ratio of market density in Buckinghamshire. is 4.54 markets compared to just 1.26 for Glamorgan. The ratio per one hundred square miles in Pembrokeshire, Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire is 1.21 markets. If the south Wales counties were placed in Farmer's list they would only rank just above County Durham in terms of market density which has a ratio of 1.08.

Table 3.8 (below) shows the most popular market days in south Wales as a whole. It adds the information provided in Table 2.10 with that discussed above. It can be seen that Saturday and Wednesday remain the days on which most locations held markets. Monday was the third most popular day on which a market was held. Only three markets were found to have been held on a Sunday and there is little difference between the number of markets held on a Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

Table 3.8

Frequency of Market Days in South Wales



The south Wales regions differ from their English counterparts in the amount of upland terrain that falls within their bounds and constitutes a large proportion of most of the counties. Equally, there would have been a lower population density in the Welsh counties. Therefore, a more accurate figure may be obtained by comparing the density of markets to the size of population. As was seen in chapter two there is no detailed information to allow a truly accurate population of nucleated settlements to be determined. A tentative method of determining the population of a market settlement used in this thesis has been to multiply the number of burgages by four. Previously, Soulsby used a multiple of five, but concluded that a multiple of four would have been more appropriate.[48] In his study of Carmarthen, Terry James used a multiple of four to determine the population in the 'old' and 'new' settlements there.[49] The tables below show the settlements for which burgage totals are available from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The following tables show an estimation of the population based on the figures from the previous tables.

Size of population is the main factor used by Dyer in order to determine whether a settlement was a small town. According to Dyer the average population of a 'small town' in England *c.*1300 was about 750 inhabitants.[50] Dyer himself has cited Trelech as an example of a small town.[51] Despite this, at the height of its prosperity in the latter thirteenth century, Trelech appears to have far exceeded this figure in terms of its size of population. Although settlement size can be a useful indicator of economic success, caution must be exercised with respect to the circumstances of life

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[48] Soulsby (1983)

[49] James, T. (1989) "Medieval Carmarthen and its Burgesses: A Study of Town Growth and Burgess Families in the Later Thirteenth Century", *The Carmarthenshire Antiquary* 25, 9-26

[50] Dyer, C. (2000) "Small Towns 1270-1540" in Palliser, D.M. (ed.) *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain volume 1, 600 - 1540*, 510

[51] Dyer, C.C. (2000) "Trade, Urban Hinterlands and Market Integration, 1300-1600: a summing up" in Galloway, J.A. (ed.) *Trade, Urban Hinterlands and Market Integration 1300 - 1600*, 106

in the March of south Wales with many settlements being vulnerable to attack, which in turn would influence the burgage totals.

	c.1262	c.1295	c.1307	c.1314	c.1350	c.1400
Abergavenny	c.230	-	-	-	-	-
Caerleon	112	c.100	c.210	c.280	-	-
Caerphilly	-	116	44	95	c.98	-
Cardiff	405	421	423	380	-	-
Chepstow	-	-	308	-	-	-
Cowbridge	58	c.233	277	277	151	-
Kenfig	-	142	142	142	144	-
Grosmont	c.102	-	-	-	-	-
Monmouth	c.190	-	-	-	-	-
Llandovery	-	c.30	-	c.81	-	-
Llantrissant	-	145	-	170	-	-
Neath	c.100	104	128	128	c.150	-
Newport Gwent	242	256	228	275	-	-
Raglan	-	-	-	-	68	-
Swansea	-	-	-	-	-	c.125-180
Talgarth	-	-	c.73	-	-	-
Trelech	-	378	271	265	-	c.225
Usk	283	-	294	296	-	-
Hay	-	c.180	-	-	-	-
Painscastle	-	-	c.50	-	-	-
New Radnor	-	-	c.260	-	-	-

Table 3.9: Recorded burgage totals for south east Wales settlements

	c.1262	c.1295	c.1307	c.1314	c.1350	c.1400
Abergavenny	c.920	-	-	-	-	-
Caerleon	448	400	840	1120	-	-
Caerphilly	-	464	176	380	c.392	-
Cardiff	1620	1684	1692	1520	-	-
Chepstow	-	-	1232	-	-	-
Cowbridge	232	c.932	1108	1108	604	-
Kenfig	-	568	568	568	576	-
Llandovery	-	c.120	-	c.324	-	-
Llantrissant	-	580	-	680	-	-
Neath	c.400	416	512	512	c.600	-
Newport Gw.	968	1024	912	1100	-	-
Raglan	-	-	-	-	272	-
Swansea	-	-	-	-	-	c.500-720
Talgarth	-	-	c.292	-	-	-
Trelech	-	1512	1084	1060	-	c.900
Usk	1132	-	1, 176	1, 184	-	-
Hay	-	.720	-	-	-	-
Painscastle	-	-	200	-	-	-
New Radnor	-	-	1040	-	-	-

Table 3.10: Estimated populations of market towns based on a multiplier of four from burgages

	c.1262	c.1295	c.1307	c.1314	c.1350	c.1400
Narbeth	-	-	-	c.10	-	-
Lampeter	-	-	-	c.26	-	-
Carmarthen	c. 168	c.286	c.290	-	-	-
Haverford	-	-	-	c.300	c.400	-
Newcastle Emlyn	-	-	54	62	-	-
Pembroke	-	-	200	c.220	c.238	-
Tenby	-	-	247	-	252	-
St. David's	-	-	-	c. 130	-	-
Cardigan	c.128	172	-	-	-	-
Dinefwr	-	c.26	c.60	-	-	-
Narbeth	-	-	-	c.10	-	-
New Moat	-	-	-	-	c.80	-
Newport Pembs.	-	-	-	c.60*	-	-
Llawhaden	-	-	-	c.174	-	-
Cilgerran	-	c.20	-	-	-	-

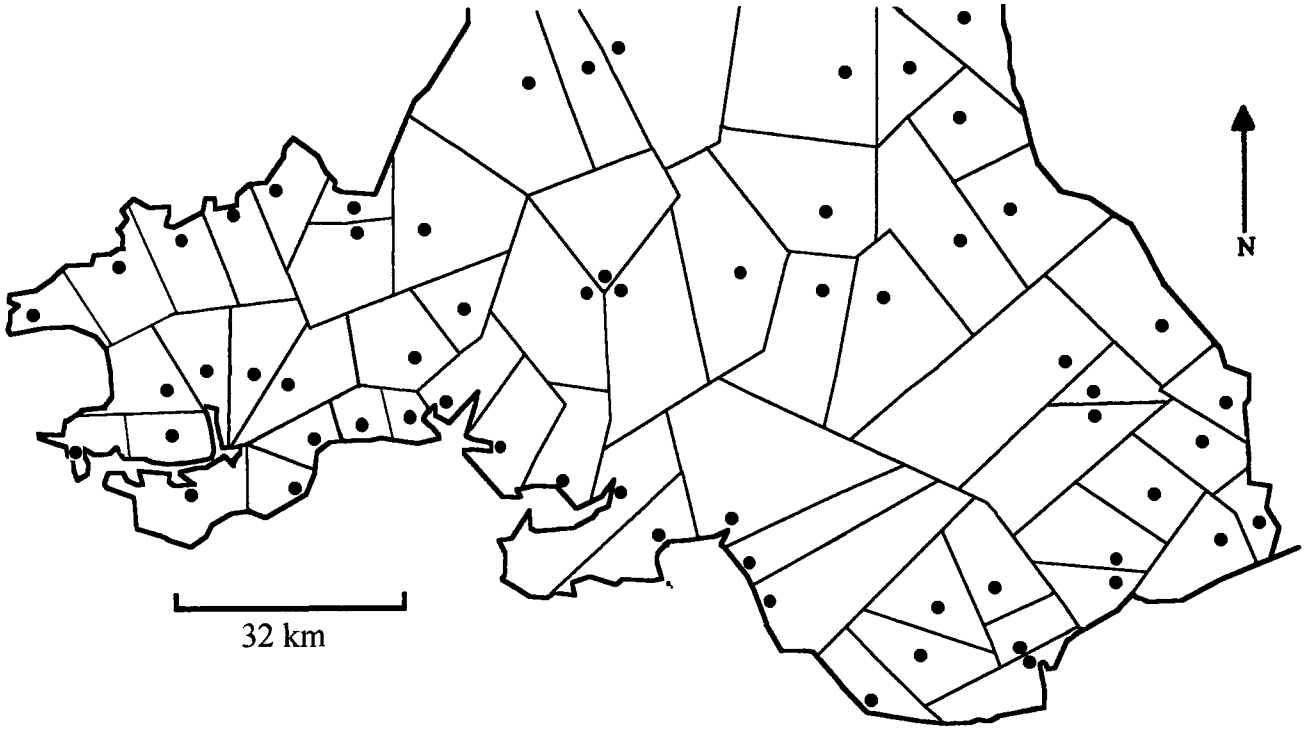
Table 3.11: Burgage totals from south west Wales Settlements * may be a gross underestimate as there 223 plots in the town in the mid-fifteenth century see Charles, B.G. (1951) "The Records of the Borough of Newport in Pembrokeshire", *National Library of Wales Journal* 7, 33-45, 120

	c.1262	c.1295	c.1307	c.1314	c.1350	c.1400
Narbeth	-	-	-	c.160	-	-
Lampeter	-	-	-	c.416	-	-
Carmarthen	c. 672	c.1144	c.1160	-	-	-
Haverford	-	-	-	c.1200	c.1600	-
Newcastle Emlyn	-	-	216	248	-	-
Pembroke	-	-	800	c.880	c.952	-
Tenby	-	-	988	-	1008	-
St. David's	-	-	-	c. 520	-	-
Cardigan	c.512	688	-	-	-	-
Dinefwr	-	c.104	c.240	-	-	-
Narbeth	-	-	-	c.40	-	-
New Moat	-	-	-	-	c.320	-
Newport Pembs.	-	-	-	c.240*	-	-
Llawhaden	-	-	-	c.696	-	-
Cilgerran	-	c.80	-	-	-	-

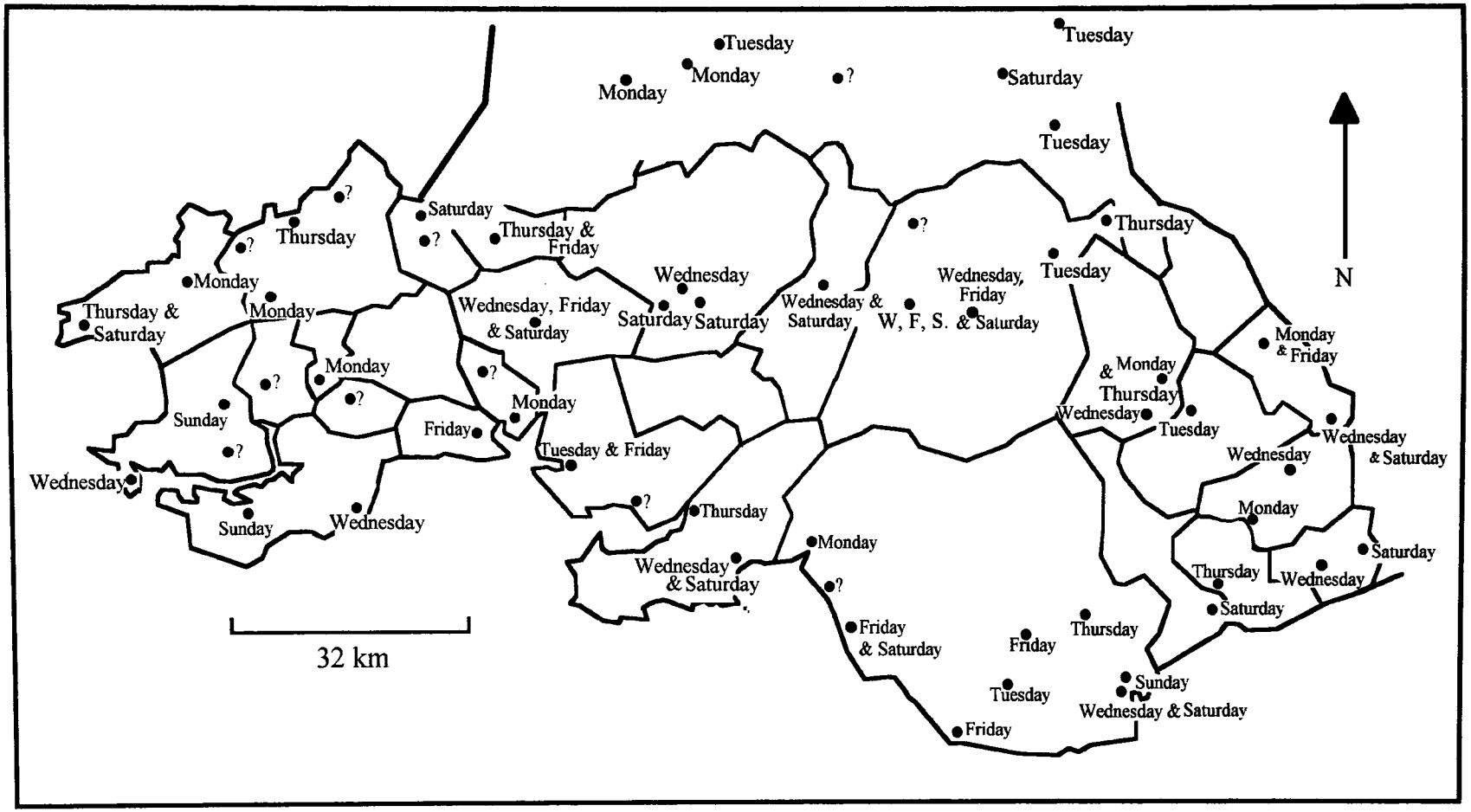
Table 3.12: Estimated Population of Settlements in south west Wales

3.6 Conclusion

Determining the size of a settlement is important in helping to establish the status of the market that was held there. This chapter, in conjunction with the previous chapter, has identified where and when markets were being held in south Wales during the Middle Ages. The hypothetical territorial framework for each of the south Wales market settlements is shown in Map 3.8 and known market days in Map 3.9. What is strikingly apparent is the pattern of market days along the road from



Map 3.8: Hypothetical market territories



Map 3.9: Known market days in south Wales

Hereford to Brecon, Llandovery and on to St. David's. On this one stretch of road there is a distinct pattern of Wednesday and Saturday markets (Map 3.9). Braudel has commented on how these two days were the official market days in some of the most prominent European cities in the Middle Ages, including Paris.[52] In the thirteenth century Wednesday-Saturday markets were held at Brecon, with the same rights extended to nearby Trecastle, and also at Llandovery. Further west there is a pattern of Wednesday-Saturday markets at Llandeilo, Dinefwr and Dryslwyn and Carmarthen, like Brecon held markets on both these days with the addition of a Friday market. A possible explanation for this is provided by the rich agricultural hinterland in the Breconshire area, allied to an important routeway. It may have been the case that agricultural produce headed both in both directions, east and west, to markets in England and to west Wales, probably to the port at Carmarthen for export in the case of wool and hides.

The pattern in Breconshire and Carmarthenshire contrasts with other parts of south Wales where it appears that markets were spaced out so as to allow a trader to complete a circuit of markets. This was particularly evident in Monmouthshire/Gwent and also appears to have been the case in Glamorgan. The situation in Pembrokeshire is less obvious for there are several markets for which there is little or no detailed evidence. It may have been the case that the original patterns of market days in Glamorgan and Gwent were based around markets held on Wednesday and Saturday. This can still, to an extent, be detected in the port towns of Monmouth, Chepstow and Newport. This pattern may have become obscured in the early to mid thirteenth century as a result of the creation of new urban centres. A market system that was cyclical in nature would encourage merchants and traders to frequent the new establishments.

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[52] Despite Wednesday and Saturday being the official market days in Paris, as Braudel points out, the level of prosperity achieved there meant that markets were often held on other days of the week as well. See Braudel, F. (1982) *Civilization and Capitalism 15th to 18th Century volume II: The Wheels of Commerce*, 29

Chapter Four

The Road System of South Wales 1100 - 1400

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters identified where markets were being held in south Wales during the Middle Ages. This chapter will discuss the road transport system that developed in south Wales during the study period. It will chart the changes that took place and argue that by 1400 a recognised road network had come into existence, which facilitated economic growth. It will not adopt an inventory style description of specific routes, as such an approach would prove time consuming and contentious. Arguments still rage about precise alignments of Roman and other routes in specific locations, with seemingly one explanation being no more or less valid than the next. This is especially true in Wales as the Roman road network remains comparatively poorly understood. Therefore this chapter will, instead, mention specific routes in order to highlight themes. Above all, three of Beresford's questions will be considered in this chapter.

Specifically, Beresford wondered whether the poor quality of inland transport slowed down the movement of traffic. He also pondered whether it shortened the journey that countrymen were willing to make to market. Thirdly, he proposed that a host of small trading centres may have existed due to the negative effect of high transport costs. This chapter will examine the evidence. It will also feature maps showing the road system as it was likely to have appeared by 1400. The evidence used to compile these maps will be based on documentary references, fieldwork and the regressive study of maps. There are no detailed extant cartographic sources from the study period. The Gough map does not go into great detail where Wales is concerned and comes from comparatively late in the period (*c.* 1360).

The creation of a recognised road network came about as a direct result of the growth in the economy which was allied to military conquest. In 1100 south Wales was a largely subsistence economy with limited surpluses and consequently few opportunities for trade. As the economy grew and rural settlement intensified increasing demands would have been put on the road system which would have altered in order to facilitate this growth. This is particularly true of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries which witnessed the height of economic prosperity. Prosperity which, in south Wales at least was fuelled by the process of conquest and consolidation which provided the impetus for growth. The late thirteenth century in particular saw a determined attack on waste land at the limits of the permanent arable, as new land was sought for cultivation. An effective transportation system was needed in order to facilitate these changes. The building of new roads was an expensive endeavour, with little opportunity for profit as travellers would sooner find their own way than pay a toll to use a metalled road.

In 1180 Henry II passed a law that roads should enable two wagons to pass, two oxherds to make their goads just touch across the width of a road and allow sixteen armed knights to ride abreast.[1] The extent to which this law was applied in south Wales is unclear. Such a requirement would have been practical, but to what extent it would be maintained and by whom would be a different matter. In south Wales towns it may have been the burgesses who were expected to maintain roads; a fourteenth century account from Carmarthen records that the burgesses there were fined for not re-making roads and bridges.[2]

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[1] British Library: MS. Charters Henry II

[2] PRO: SC6/1218/9

4.2 Medieval Roads

Roads and tracks have allowed virtually every other feature on the landscape to develop. Individual settlements such as castles, towns and villages required roads in order to exist and function effectively. The importance attached to any given road depends on where it was leading to, but invariably it would reflect economic or military significance. Roads and tracks rarely belong solely to one particular period and dating often proves problematic, but an overall investigation into a system of linkages is likely to reveal if a route was in use during a particular period. When a road came into being is less important than when it was actually being used. One of the biggest problems is that travel was an essential part of everyday life and as such the vast majority of journeys went unrecorded. The study of the medieval road system has, with only a couple of notable exceptions, been largely neglected in comparison with earlier and later periods. In recent years the work of C. Taylor[3] and B.P. Hindle[4] has added greatly to knowledge and has been an influence on the present investigation.

4.3 Pre-War Research

The most notable review of medieval roads undertaken before the second world war was provided by Sir Frank Stenton in 1936, first delivered as the Creighton lecture in the University of London and later published in the *Economic History Review.*[5] Reflecting the lack of research into medieval roads is the fact that a section from the same article was to appear 22 years later, in a volume published to coincide with the release of a reproduction of the Gough map - Stenton's account forming part of a wider discussion of the map.[6] Hindle has described Stenton's work as the only

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[3] Taylor, C.C. (1994) *Roads and Tracks of Britain*, new edition, (London, Orion)

[4] Hindle, B.P. (1993) *Roads, Tracks and Their Interpretation* (London, Batsford)

[5] Stenton, F.M. (1936) 'The Road System of Medieval England', *Ec. Hist. Rev.*, 7, 1, 1-21

[6] Parsons, E.J.S. (1958) *The Map of Great Britain Circa A.D. 1360, Known as the Gough Map, An Introduction to the Facsimilie*, (Oxford, Bodleian Library and the R.G.S.)

'comprehensive study' of medieval roads prior to his own research.[7] Despite this, Stenton regarded his paper as an attempt to indicate the existence of a road system in England during the Middle Ages and not a general survey of medieval English roads.[8]

Writing before Stenton, C.T. Flower, whilst reviewing a collection of medieval court cases concerning public works, coined a phrase concerning roads of which Hindle was to become quite fond, namely that medieval roads 'made and maintained themselves' through habitual use after a path was cleared.[9] This is as much a result of the fact that direct historical evidence for medieval roads is poor, nonetheless some general themes were identified in the pre-war study of medieval roads. Stenton demonstrated the usefulness of reconstructing royal itineraries and individual accounts of journeys, an approach later taken up by Hindle, and pointed to evidence that there was a great deal of demand for roads as trade expanded. Traffic would have included horses and carts as well as people travelling on foot. Travellers would have included merchants, officials and the royal court.[10] J.J. Jusserand also included minstrels, messengers and outlaws, as well as preachers, friars and pardoners.[11] Hindle added bishops, travelling justices, sheriffs, and revenue collectors.[12] Equally peasants travelling to markets, military expeditions, pilgrims and farmers droving cattle would also have made use of the road system. In Wales, Hindle identified two main stretches of medieval road, and partly indicated a third (Map 4.1). The two main stretches were taken from the medieval map of Great Britain, commonly known as the Gough map, and the third stretch that Hindle shows

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[7] Hindle, B.P. (1976) 'The Road Network of Medieval England and Wales', *J. Hist. Geog.*, 3, 207

[8] Stenton (1936), 1

[9] Hindle (1976), 226

[10] Stenton (1936), 2

[11] Hindle, B.P. (1998) *Medieval Roads and Tracks*, 8; Jusserand, J.J. (1889) *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages*

[12] *Ibid.* 8

links Cardiff and Newport. This section does not appear on the Gough map. However, the actual extent of roads being used in the Middle Ages was undoubtedly much greater than is shown on the Gough map and the surviving Roman road network was undoubtedly an influence (Map 4.2).

Following the Norman conquest the focal point of English administration was centred on London, just as it had been with the Romans, who had created a road system based around it. Stenton was among the first to realise that Roman roads were at least still partially intact and being used in the Middle Ages, albeit with some sections in certain areas apparently considered too rough to be travelled upon. Where this occurred, a track would often form alongside the main Roman road, as people avoided the uncomfortable surface but wished to head in the same direction as the main established routeway. The lack of documentary and archaeological evidence is largely responsible for the lack of attention paid to medieval roads. Stenton highlighted the usefulness of royal itineraries as one of the few available forms of document, he also considered contemporary cartographic evidence and was probably the first to take an interest in the roads of the Gough map.

4.4 The Gough Map

The Bodleian map of Great Britain - the Gough map - was first described by the antiquarian Richard Gough in 1780. Following his death it, along with a collection of other maps and documents, was left to the Bodleian Library in Oxford, but its exact origins are unknown. Richard Gough purchased the map at auction in 1774 from a private collection, it had been displayed several years earlier in the rooms of the Society of Antiquaries of London by T. Martin, who may have known more about its origins but no record has been found. Several sixteenth century maps appear to have used it as their source material.[13]

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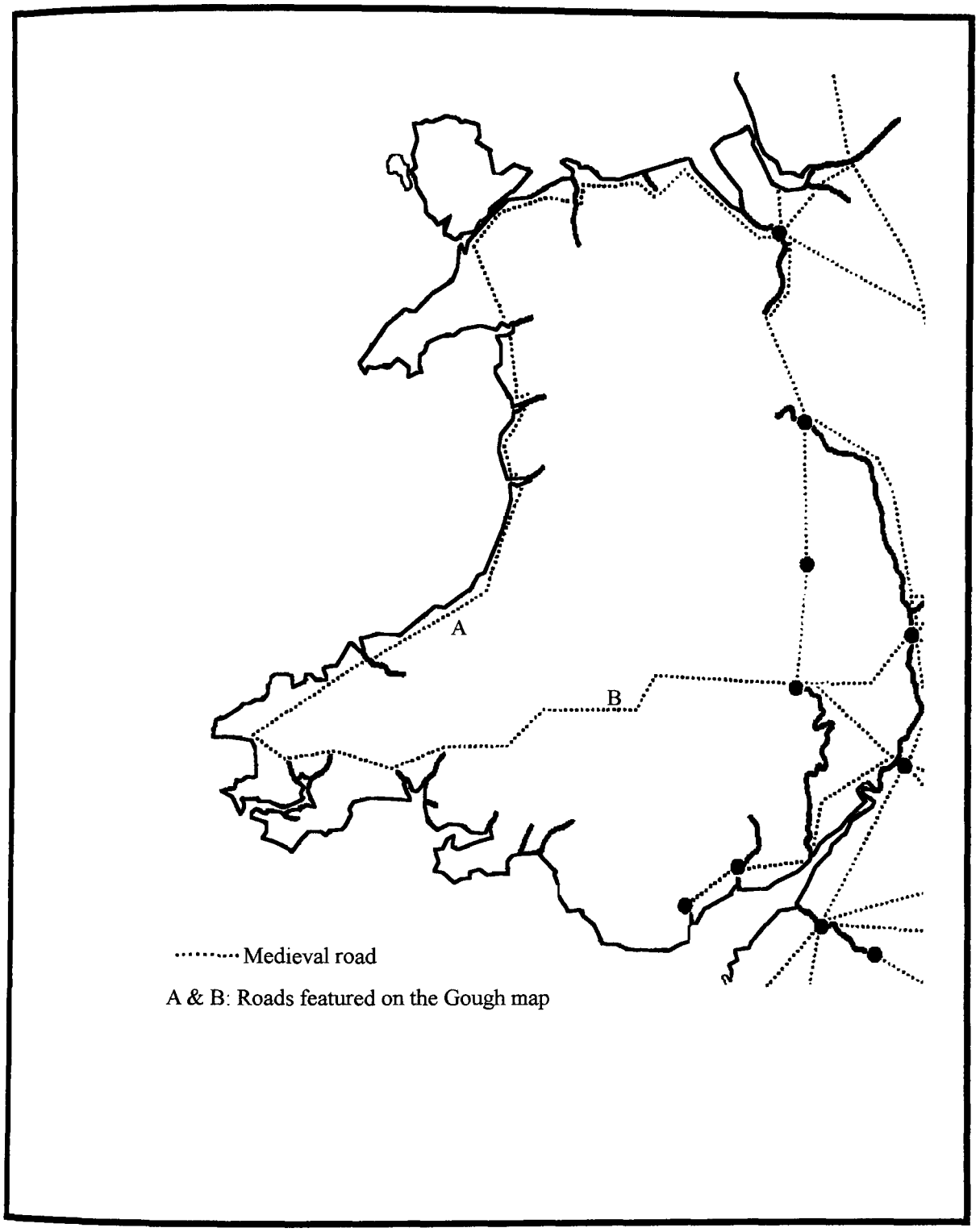
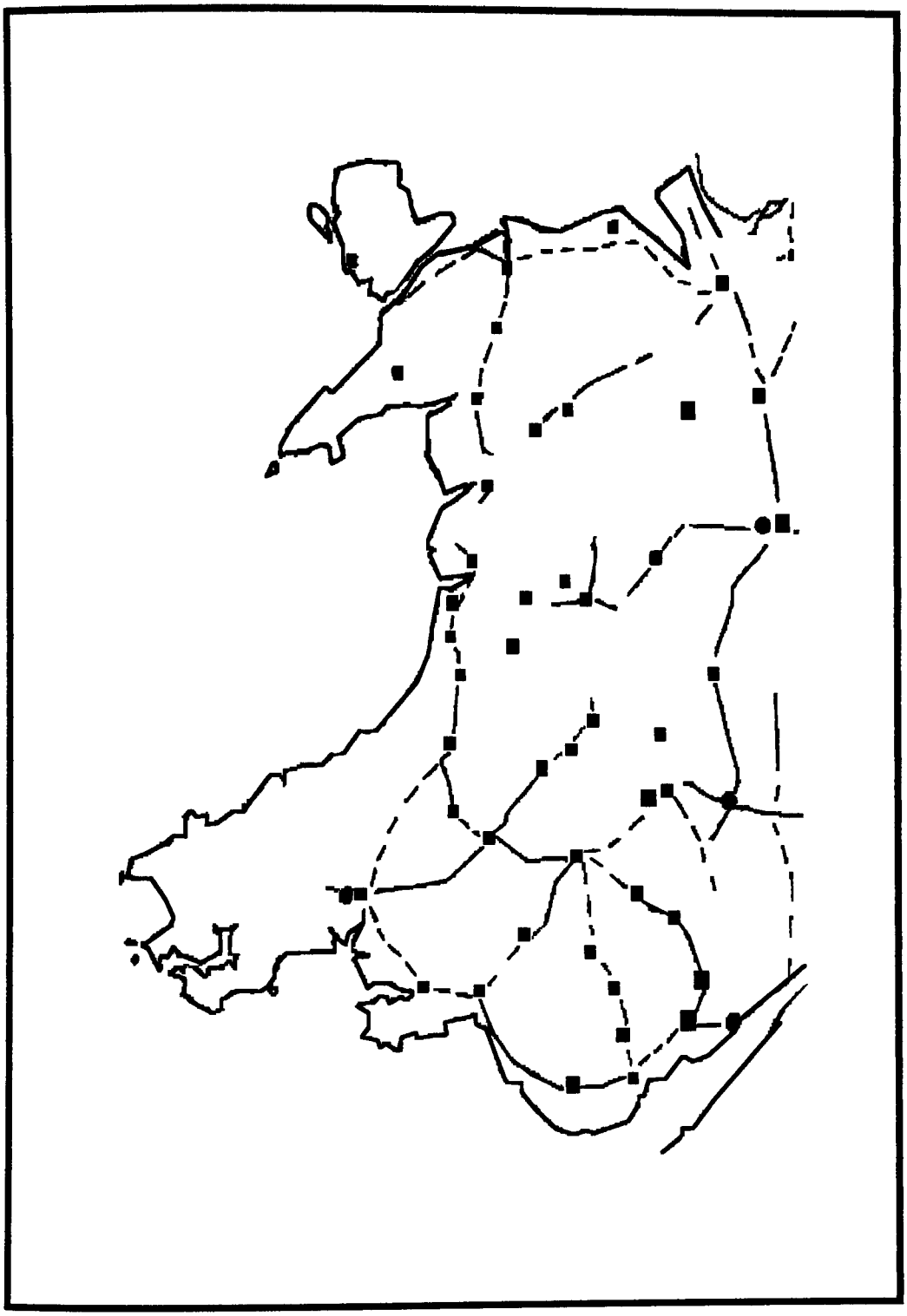
[13] *Ibid.*, 2



Map 4.1: Hindle's map of the roads of medieval Wales (after Hindle 1993)



Map 4.2: The Roman roads of Wales (after Moore, 1970)

Several suggestions were made as to the date of origin for the map with Martin suggesting the mid-fourteenth century. Modern palaeographers seem to agree with this and there are other clues in that the town of Sheppey in Kent, featured on the map, changed its name to Queenborough in 1366 in honour of Queen Philippa. A stranded ship drawn just off Orkney is of a style of warship in use during the fourteenth century, particularly during the reign of Edward III and featured on several town seals, Calais is also featured, this could be due to the fact that it was regarded as an 'English' town after 1347.[14] Stenton places the map at around 1350, because Hessle rather than Hull is indicated on the map as being the main landing point for the main ferry across the Humber.[15] More recent commentators have placed the map at around 1360,[16] with Hindle suggesting that the map may have been drawn earlier and revised in 1360.[17]

The map measures 116cm by 51cm and shows 4, 731.48 km of road, although apart from the settlements rivers are the most obvious feature.[18] Stenton was probably the first person to pay detailed attention to the roads of the Gough map, although they were later classified by Parsons.[19] Parsons identified categories within main, secondary and local roads. Later, Hindle was to add to this by including roads that Parsons had omitted, as well as producing a classification of the various symbols featured taken to represent settlements.[20] Several well known roads are omitted and

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[14] *Ibid.*, 2

[15] Stenton (1936), 7

[16] Hindle, B.P. (1980) 'The Towns and Roads of the Gough map (*c.* 1360)', *The Manchester Geographer*, 1, 35 - 49; Taylor (1994) 120-21

[17] Hindle (1993), 55

[18] Hindle (1980), 8

[19] Parsons (1958), 16

[20] Hindle (1980), 9

Hindle cites the examples of the road from London to Dover and from York to Newcastle but points out that the settlements *en route* are shown correctly.[21]

From a Welsh point of view, the most glaring omission is the main Roman road through south Wales which was later to form the basis of the A48, the main route through south Wales prior to the construction of the M4 motorway. Still, the settlements *en route* such as Caerwent, Newport and Cowbridge are shown in the correct order. The only other roads in Wales shown are a coastal road in the west and a route from Hereford to Brecon to Lliwell (Llywel) which is probably Trecastle, the extra mural borough of Brecon. This settlement is believed to have been established as an additional trading place further along the road from Brecon, with Llywel being the name of the ecclesiastical parish in which it is found. The road that passes through it then heads towards Llangadock but as Stenton originally noted and as both E.J Parsons and C. Taylor investigated, the Gough map shows the route as heading up over Mynydd Myddfai to a height of 335m OD before dropping down towards Llangadock. From the sixteenth century to the present day an alternative but less steep route is the main road, which takes virtually the same amount of travelling time as the upland route. Taylor suggests that both routes may have been in use at the time the Gough map was compiled.[22] There has been some debate as to whether the road from Brecon to Trecastle is of Roman origin, for ease of construction by soldiers, Roman roads tended to be direct and therefore have been known to go straight up over hillsides and mountains, this could have established the upland route at Mynydd Myddfai. Apart from the lack of archaeological evidence, which consists of a few chance finds, or indeed investigation, it is often pointed out that the Norman town of Brecon is not believed to be situated on the site of a Roman precursor. The position of the Roman fort of Y Gaer located further up the valley leads to the questioning of the

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[21] Hindle (1976), 196

[22] Taylor (1994), 124

need for a Roman road in this area. From Llangadock the route heads towards St. David's by way of Llandeilo, Carmarthen, St. Clears, Llawhaden and Haverfordwest.

The overall scale of the Gough map is about 1:1,000,000. This was probably not intentional on the part of the cartographer, but it does mean that road distances, where shown, are reasonably accurate, indeed it seems that the compiler did not include roads for which distances were not known.[23] Settlements are represented by characters consisting of varying symbols, sometimes appearing in combination with each other. Parsons suggests that they represent the status of a particular settlement, with towns at the bottom of the scale represented by a single building simple in design whereas those at the top of the scale feature a cluster of buildings and an imposing church spire.[24] Hindle has studied the symbols and proposed a classification. He identifies four main types, two of which can occur, with or without spires: Type 1a is a single house, 1b single house with a spire, type 2a are multiple houses, 2b multiple houses with spires, the third type are settlements with town walls and the fourth type are castles (Map 4.3).[25] Hindle points out that Wales has a relative overabundance of castles, which is hardly surprising, given the nature of the Norman conquest of Wales.

Whilst coping admirably in fitting so much information into such a small space, the compiler of the Gough map made several errors, particularly in Wales. For example Newport and Caerleon are sited on the east instead of the west bank of the Usk. Elsewhere rivers are wrongly named in Merionethshire, Beaumaris is wrongly situated and the River Teifi is omitted.[26] In south Wales there are numerous market

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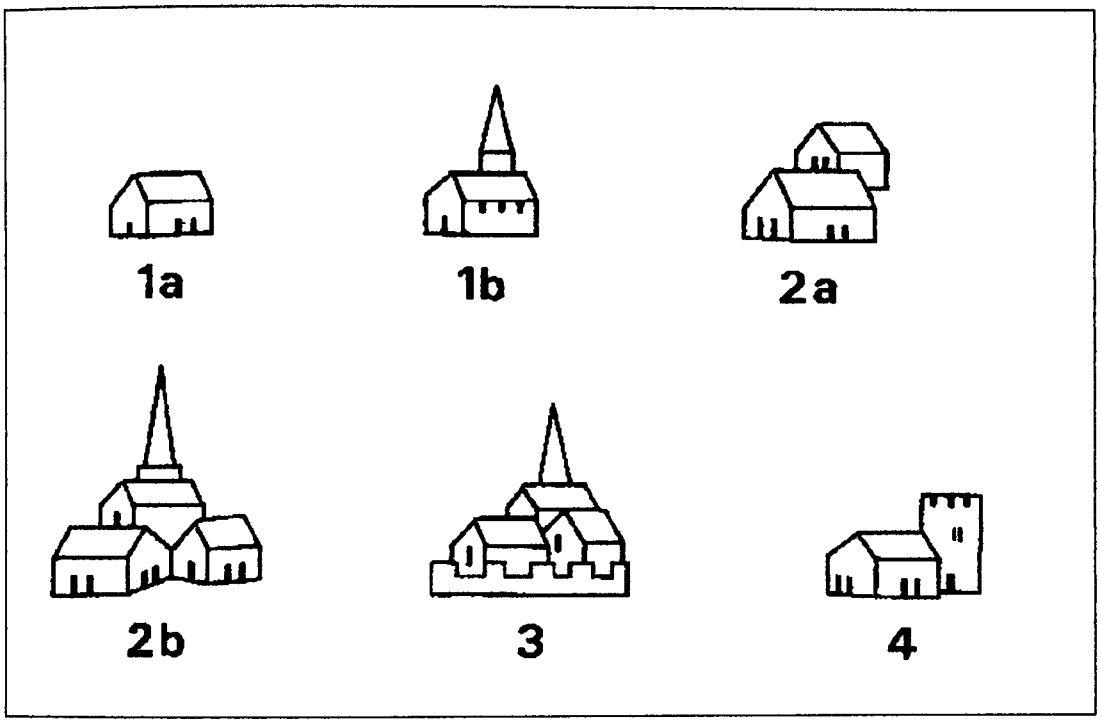
[23] Hindle (1980) *passim*

[24] Parsons (1958), 9

[25] Hindle (1980) 46-47

[26] Parsons (1958) 26-28; The OS have to an extent added to the general confusion over the Gough map by transcribing Kardyf (or Cardiff) as Caphyl on the published editions of the Gough map so as to create

settlements that are either not featured or not named. Among the absent places are Swansea, Neath and Kenfig. The 1958 published version of the map also features some wildly inaccurate information; the most notable being the placing of Aberafan between Cardigan and Aberystwyth (Map 4.4). It can be compared to the original map itself, Map 4.5.



Map 4.3, The symbols on the Gough map which were classified by Hindle (1980)

The Gough map is not the only contemporary cartographical source, but when it comes to featuring settlements and roads it is of much more use than the thirteenth century Mathew Paris maps, the product of a St. Albans monk. Nonetheless there are many roads and settlements not included on the Gough map, particularly in Wales. The map could have been compiled through a general survey but it is just as likely that it was compiled through a combination of methods which would have included

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a situation whereby observers often question why 'Caerphilly' is not represented by a castle.

the study of itineraries of individual travellers such as sheriffs, justices and traders. Hindle suggests that it may have been an official compilation for government use.[27]

4.5 Recent Research

In 1982 the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales noted how hollow trails, '. . .the characteristic form which medieval roads took',[28] were one of the most distinctive features on the Glamorgan landscape and yet the Commission expressed its surprise at how comparatively little attention had been paid to them in terms of study. For its own part the Commission examined several hollow trails, but admitted that problems of recording such an array of linear features prevented a more comprehensive effort and that problems of definition meant that they could only reasonably argue for a selection of upland routes to be considered as being medieval roads. Instead the Commission described what it deemed to be the 'characteristic features' of medieval roads and provide several upland examples.[29] The overall tone of the chapter was one of surprise and perhaps embarrassment that so little could be presented on what is, and was, one of the most obvious aspects of everyday life; travel by an established route. Recent research has cast doubt on some of the Commission's findings with regard to roads. Excavations on Cefn Drum near Pontardulais have shown that a trackway presumed by the Commission to be modern, is, in fact contemporary with the sixteenth century settlement.[30]

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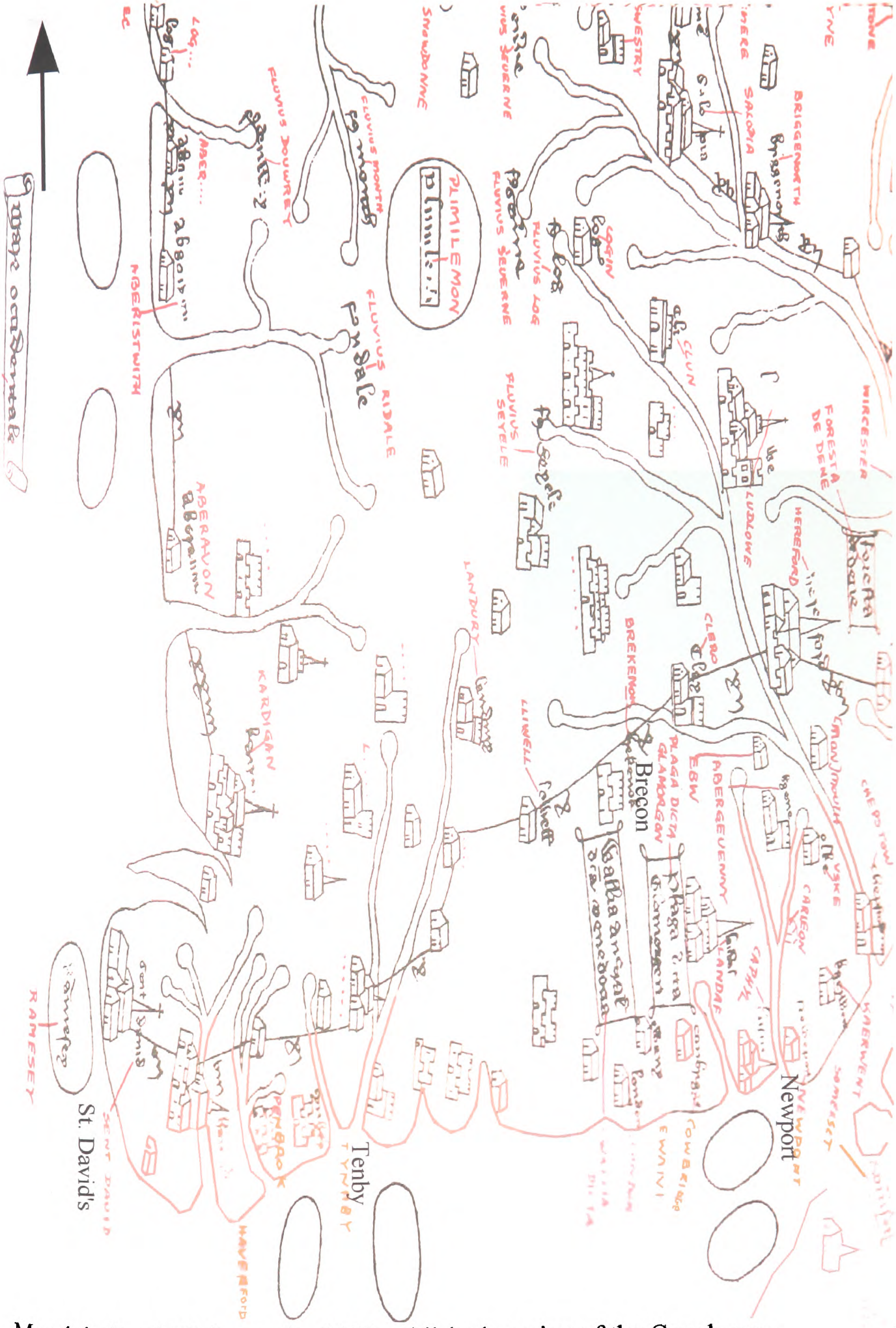
[27] Hindle (1998), 31

[28] RCAHMW (1982) *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Glamorgan, Vol. 3 part 2: Medieval Non-Defensive Secular Monuments*, (Cardiff, HMSO), 347-48

[29] *Ibid.* 347-49

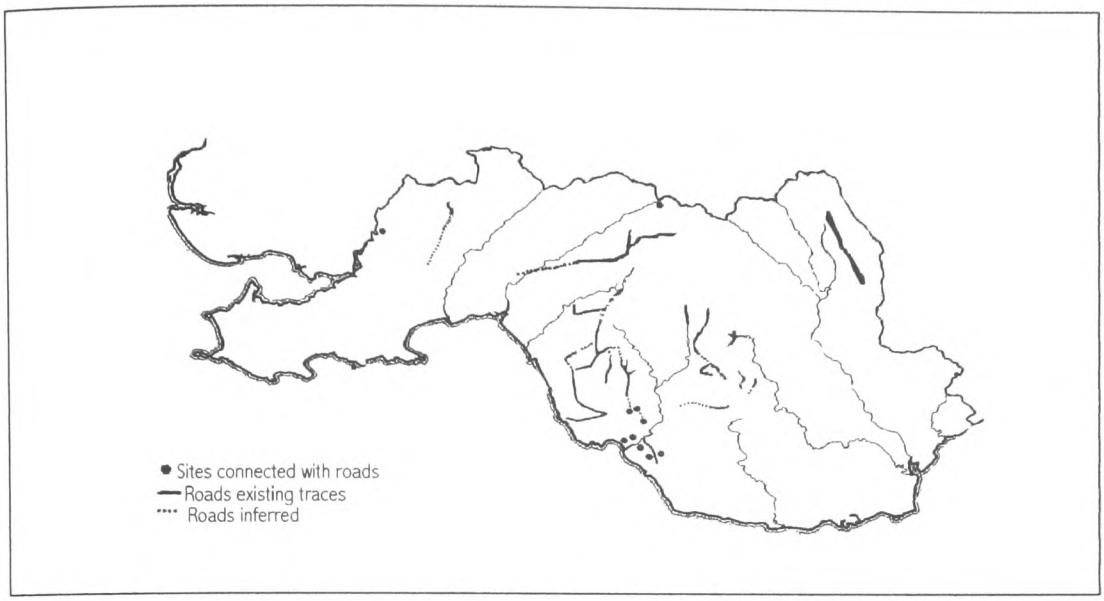
[30] Kissock, J.A. & Johnston, R.A.S. (1998) "Excavation of a House Platform at Cefn Drum, Pontardulais", *Archaeology in Wales* 38, 73 - 76



Map 4.4: South Wales on the 1958 published version of the Gough map

Map 4.5: Wales on the Gough map, c. 1360

Preserved in the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (MS Gough Gen. Top. 16)



Map 4.6: Medieval roads in Glamorgan as identified by the Royal Commission. From RCAHMW (1982) An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Glamorgan vol. III part II non-defensive, 347

In the preface to the 1994 edition of his book *Roads and Tracks of Britain*, (originally published in 1979) Christopher Taylor wrote:

> 'The pleasure which comes when one is asked by one's publisher to produce a new preface to a book written fifteen years ago is slightly tinged with regret at the realisation that the reprint results from the fact that the study of roads and tracks has hardly advanced in all that time.'[31]

The most prominent researcher into medieval roads and tracks is undoubtedly B.P. Hindle, formerly of the University of Salford. In his research published in 1976 Hindle sought to consider medieval roads as a network and examined the available sources so as to construct such a network.[32]

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[31] Taylor (1994), ix

[32] Hindle (1976) *passim*

Hindle makes several points that are worth considering in more detail. Firstly, that the medieval concept of a road was more of a right of way or an 'easement' rather than a physical entity, so much so that Hindle says that, if a medieval traveller found a road impassable, they would have a right to diverge from it to the extent of trampling crops in an adjacent piece of land.[33] Whilst undoubtedly this activity occurred, whether it was a common occurrence may be a different matter. A local lord for instance may not have appreciated his crops being trampled and certainly not on a regular basis, and may therefore have taken measures to ensure that this did not happen by providing clear points of access through a particular area. It would have been a situation that could have caused conflict in a locality particularly at times of bad harvest. In his study of royal itineraries, Hindle states that the roads must have been in a good state of repair so as to be able to carry the volume of numbers represented by the monarch, his court and exchequer, which suggests that someone must have been maintaining them. After all, in the post-Conquest period, many of the Roman roads would have been over a thousand years old.

The continued use of Roman roads is a further point that Hindle noted, estimating that 40% of Roman roads in England and Wales remained in use during the Middle Ages.[34] Hindle also considered seasonal travel and whether journeys took place in winter, when the weather and climate would be less favourable and roads more boggy. He concluded that overall medieval travellers found little difficulty moving around at any time of year and that poor road conditions in the winter were not a major deterrent.[35]

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[33] Hindle (1993), 54

[34] Hindle, B.P. (1978) 'Seasonal Variations in Travel in Medieval England', *Journal of Transport History*, 4, 170 - 178

[35] *Ibid.*, 177

The work of Hindle together with that of Edwards has, the two authors claim, demonstrated that roads often acted as feeders for the river system, providing a quick, easy and effective way of transporting people and goods in England.[36] Moving animals was easier and cheaper by road. Hindle and Edwards argue that by the end of the medieval period there was a well integrated transport network using roads and rivers that was, 'well capable of serving the economy'.[37] This confirms a statement first made by Stenton in 1936, who also said that the road system was adequate for the needs of the economy. This view has not gone unchallenged and will be discussed below. One aspect of Hindle's research was to produce a map showing how the medieval road network would have looked. This map was later added to, with the work of Edwards on navigable rivers, in order to produce a map showing both medieval roads and navigable rivers in England and Wales. Few roads or rivers are shown in Wales and the south Wales Portway - described by Gerald of Wales as the 'way between towns'[38] - is only shown for a fraction of its course (see Map 4.1). This map contrasts sharply with D. Moore's map of Roman roads in Wales which features a myriad of routes (see Map 4.2).[39]

A point often made by Hindle is that many economic history books, 'talk glibly about the growth of trade and industry but totally ignore the routes along which the goods were carried'.[40] Hindle advocates future studies to be integrated, 'road/economic and landscape' studies of parishes, counties or regions. Hindle has often cited the work of Dyer particularly his interests in the 'Consumer and the

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[36] Edwards, J.F.& Hindle, B.P. (1991) 'The Transportation System of Medieval England and Wales', *J. Hist. Geog.* 17, 2, 123 - 34; Hindle (1993), 56

[37] Hindle (1993), 56

[38] Kightly (1988), 38

[39] Moore, D. (1970) *Caerleon: Fortress of the Legions*, (Cardiff, University of Wales Press)

[40] Hindle (1993), 12

Market'[41] as the type of study an analysis of the road system should be linked with.[42] Equally, Dyer's work on 'Hidden Trade' could also be applied, as roads are an influence on such 'hidden' trading places.[43] Dyer has yet to take up Hindle's call, but one social and economic historian who appears to have is J. Masschaele.

Masschaele has investigated transport costs in the Middle Ages, in addition to studying medieval markets.[44] He utilised the administrative accounts of sheriffs involved in royal purveyancing which show that the cost of land transport changed little over a period of some four hundred years from the thirteenth century. The role of the sheriff was to acquire foodstuffs and arrange for its carriage to specified destinations[45] Using these accounts, Masschaele reveals that land carriage costs were generally higher than those of river transport because there were increased difficulties facing road transport in winter when roads were treacherous.[46] In his book, Masschaele looked at how commercial activity changed towns and their rural hinterlands by examining markets, commodities traded and the transport system.[47] Whilst Masschaele is aware of the work of Hindle and Edwards, having cited their 1991 article, his otherwise interesting book is let down by the fact that at the start of chapter 9 he writes:

> 'Historians commonly assume that transportation facilities in this period were unequal to the task of

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[41] Dyer, C.C. (1989), 305 - 26

[42] Edwards & Hindle (1991) note 1,133

[43] Dyer, C.C. (1992), 143-52

[44] Masschaele, J. (1993), , 2, 266 - 279

[45] *Ibid.*, 266-68

[46] *Ibid.*, 268

[47] Masschaele, J. (1997)

> facilitating a commercial economy. . .this chapter suggests that this assumption needs rethinking.'[48]

It would be interesting to know who these historians are, after all, Stenton stated that the medieval road system was adequate for the amount of traffic in 1936 and Hindle has been saying the same since 1976. Masschaele merely provides more evidence to support their claims. One issue with which Masschaele treats with scepticism is the idea first mentioned by C.T. Flower and advanced by Hindle that medieval roads 'made and maintained' themselves.[49] Masschaele discusses evidence from pre-Conquest Anglo-Saxon charters that stated that highways should permit two carts to pass and which no one could close or divert if it led to a city, town, castle or port. Masschaele argues that this tradition which began with a small number of readily identifiable roads was broadened in the post-Conquest period by first adding to the number of routes and then by adding the notion of public rights of through passage.[50] Masschaele goes on to cite thirteenth century court documents that deal with infringements to the kings highway, such as narrowing and obstructing, which were considered offences against the Crown.[51] In early medieval Welsh law there are also examples of references made to the use, provision and maintenance of roads.[52]

One issue that Masschaele tackles, but which Hindle curiously seems to neglect, is that of roads within and leading to and from towns. Masschaele states that 'internal' roads such as these would have consisted of a level stone surface inside and immediately outside a settlement.[53] In his book on medieval town plans Hindle points

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[48] *Ibid.*, 190

[49] Hindle (1976) *passim*

[50] Masschaele (1997), 196-7

[51] Masschaele (1997), 197

[52] *Welsh Medieval Law* 12

[53] Masschaele, J. (1997) *Peasants, Merchants and Markets: Inland Trade in Medieval England 1150*

out that the study of streets within towns is an interesting one and considers settlement form but does not discuss the structure of internal roads.[54] The technology would have been available to build roads in the post-Conquest period, a time that saw the construction of planned settlements and complex fortifications, and any settlement would have benefited from good communications particularly in terms of trade. Hindle does not say whether roads within settlements would have 'made and maintained themselves', but it is highly unlikely that this was the case, as evidence of a stone track at Trelech indicates.[55]

There is no obvious evidence for new road construction in the Middle Ages, certainly not at a level comparable to the Roman period or the turnpikes much later. There are one or two individual examples, such as during the campaigns of Edward I in north Wales, but otherwise documentary evidence is sparse and archaeological evidence is not in abundance, as excavation tends to focus on places rather than the routes that link them. Building long stretches of road would have cost money and would not turn an immediate profit for the builder, especially as tolls were often charged for entering commercial settlements rather than using roads. Tracks almost certainly did form through habitual use between settlements but engineered roads may have been more to do with whether an individual or a group had the wealth, influence or the manpower to set about such a task.

A limited amount of fieldwork was undertaken as part of this study with two broad aims. Firstly, to assess the current appearance of the landscape a task that complemented the regressive map analysis. Secondly, many old routes are preserved as rights of way and walking them, it was felt, would provide better insights into the reason for their being. Emphasis was placed on studying the main routes that linked

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- *1350*, 174

[54] Hindle, B.P. (1990) *Medieval Town Plans* (Princes Risborough, Shire)

[55] Howell, R. (2000a) "Excavations at Trelech: 1996 - 1999", *Mon. Ant.* 16, 145

medieval market places, as opposed to examining every holloway that may date from the Middle Ages within the study area. The principle being employed is that, if a routeway links two settlements with contemporary histories, it is likely that the routeway itself shares a substantial part of that history, unless it can be proven otherwise.[56]

A useful local source exists as a result of section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) which requires local authorities to maintain definitive maps and statements for their district which feature rights of way, and specifically not rights of way that are newly created.[57] Plans for south Wales held by the unitary authorities were consulted, although whilst this was being undertaken these maps were being updated.

Place-names and earthwork evidence have also been considered. Earthworks consisted of hollowways which were studied in the fieldwork aspect of the research programme. However, it is extremely difficult to date the origin of roads, and equally as difficult as to determine when a route was being used and when it was not. Names of roads were also considered, in Welsh the elements *sarn*, *ffordd*, *heol* and *stryd* are variation of 'road' and there may be a link between old English and modern Welsh particularly with OE: *forde* and MW: *ffordd* both meaning 'a road'. It is suggested that roads containing these placename elements could be of great antiquity and were probably in use during the Middle Ages.

Evidence from place-names and the names of roads has not been relied upon uncritically, however, and there are good reasons why this should be so. Hindle has

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[56] Weeks, R. (2002) "A Post-Dissolution Monastic Site and its Landscape: Cillonydd on Mynydd Maen", *Gw. Loc. Hist.* 92, 11

[57] Section 53 *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981*

urged caution particularly when considering the names of old routes. He correctly points out that a *via regia* may never have actually been travelled by a king or a *herepath* trodden by an army, although the fact that a route features such a name may reflect some level of importance.[58]

4.6 The South Wales Road System *c.* 1100

Prior to the arrival of the Normans Wales lacked an urban tradition. In south Wales the legionary fortress at Caerleon, the *civitas* capitals of the Silures at Caerwent and that of the Demetae at Carmarthen fell into disuse but the metalled roads that linked them remained. The Roman road system of south Wales is not well understood in comparison with England. This is largely due to the influence of a distinctive topography which meant that in upland areas there is no 'typical' Roman road with characteristic features. The two most prominent stretches of road dating from the Roman period are, firstly the route stretching along the coastal plain through Glamorgan, later known as the Portway. This later formed the basis for the A48, the main road through south Wales prior to the construction of the M4 motorway. Secondly, there is 'Sarn Helen' the Roman road which heads from Brecon to Llandovery and on towards Haverfordwest and St. David's. The Portway is frequently referred to in documentary sources, usually concerning grants of land adjacent to it. For example, in *c.*1250 Robert de Bonvilston granted his lands between his sheepfold in the Vale and the Portway to the Church.[59]

These roads would have been very familiar to the medieval traveller in south Wales. In 1188 Gerald of Wales was using both of these routes on his journey through Wales, describing the lower of the two roads as being the 'way between towns'. This reflects the influence the Roman roads had on the siting of the Norman towns. When

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[58] Hindle (1993), 53

[59] NLW: Penrice and Margam manuscripts, 188

he was not using these roads Gerald employed local guides in areas where he was uncertain of the route. The basic infrastructure, a legacy of the Roman period, was therefore in place. The main methods of travel were on foot, on horseback or by cart, the latter would have been particularly difficult in upland areas.

Despite some of the more fanciful suggestions as to the origins of the name of the Brecon to St. David's road, it seems most likely that 'Sarn Helen' is an anglicised corruption of the Welsh Sarn y Lleng or 'road of the legion'. The collection of Welsh folk tales, the *Mabinogion*, tells of how this and other Roman roads are named after Helen, the wife of Emperor Maximus who reportedly thought it sad that the roads in Wales were not identified by names.[60] The most southerly stretch of road from Caerleon to Loughor is attested to historically in the *Antonine Itinerary* where it is mentioned in relation to *Bomium*, the likely predecessor of medieval and later Cowbridge. The nineteenth century Glamorgan historian G.T. Clark has called this road the *Via Julia Maritima*, although his basis for doing so is unclear apart from relying on comments made by Camden. There appears to be no further historical justification for the use of the name.[61] Five milestones were discovered near Neath. Unfortunately none were *in situ*, making determination of the exact line of the road difficult and making it impossible to determine whether they were part of an accurate, spaced series.

The Roman road in the east running from the fort at Brecon Gaer to Caerleon by way of Abergavenny has been subject to consideration by the Ordnance Survey field surveyors. In their notes they recorded that whilst this route has been subject to much comment actual knowledge of it tends to be rather vague. The OS suggests a

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[60] Gantz, J. (1981) *The Mabinogion* (London, Penguin)

[61] Notes from the Thomas Wakeman Collection in the Library of the Society of Antiquaries of London: Wakeman MS. 790/23. The term *Via Julia Maritima* is used as is *Via Strata Maritima*

slight variation to the route described by Margary.[62] The disagreement is over the direction of the route between Caerleon and Usk; Margary states that the road passes to the east of the River Usk whereas the OS suggest the west and point to archaeological evidence to the south to support their view.[63]

It is suspected that modern roads overlay the Roman road from Abergavenny to Brecon Gaer, the exact alignment is uncertain, particularly near Tretower where a dual carriageway by-passes an old road that heads towards a road that links Hereford and Brecon. The placename Hereford is interesting as it possesses overtones of the Saxon for military road, '*here-paeth*', whereas *ford* and its various derivations is Welsh for road, therefore displaying a mix of Saxon and Celtic meaning 'military road'. This could be quite appropriate, being on the border of a major routeway into Wales in use from the Roman period. A distinction should be made between roads within settlements and those that link them, it seems plausible that a level stone surface may have been a feature of some medieval Welsh towns.

4.7 The Structure of Medieval Roads

Evidence as to the structure of medieval roads varies according from region to region. Some roads that have been tentatively identified as being medieval have in fact turned out to be much later. Post medieval evidence from north Gwent indicates that ash and other burnt material was accumulated to form a dry compact path through wet/boggy ground. In the town of Monmouth it seems that stone and slag formed a compacted road surface. In his study of Tintern Abbey, Courtney noted that cart tracks near the abbey were cut into bedrock along sections of holloway. Recently a road surface has been excavated in Trelech where a compacted stone surface was

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[62] Margary, I.D. (1967) *Roman Roads* (London, John Baker), 333-4

[63] Unpublished OS field surveyors notes, RCAHMW. It could well be that both the east and west alignments are Roman roads.

uncovered which appeared to feature indentations from cart wheels and which possibly formed the third main road through the town.[64]

In the Vale of Glamorgan there is a direct road linking Llantwit Major and Cowbridge. Called 'Llantwit Major road' - the B442 - it heads into old Llantwit, specifically into the area of suspected medieval settlement. The route heads towards Barry on Boverton road toward St. Athan and is distinctive due to an absence of other routeways. The Llantwit Major by-pass which was opened in 1978 goes 'over' it. Street names in Llantwit include Wine Street and by the Church a corpse road 'Burial Lane'. A 'Wick Road' runs from Bridgend to Llantwit, the widths of this road vary greatly, at one point it heads off linking with another route known as 'Bakers Lane'. The route linking Cowbridge and Llantwit is shown in Map 4.7 (stretch of road 15). There is a strong case for many of the roads in the Vale of Glamorgan dating to at least the Middle Ages due to the fact that it is prime agricultural land and has been for centuries.

Map 4.7 was compiled using a range of techniques and gives a strong representation as to how the road system that linked market places in thirteenth century south Wales is likely to have looked. This map features the main routeways, many of which are important routes today. The prominence of the Roman road is apparent, although the upland routes of the south Wales valleys are not shown on this map, but feature instead on Map 4.8. An explanation of each of the numbered sections of road can be found in the appendices. Many of the new towns of the period were established at coastal locations emphasising the importance attached to maritime transport and the road network reflects this (Map 4.7).

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[64] Howell, R. (2000a), 131 - 45

A specific examination of Gower reveals that the main Roman road linking Swansea and Loughor is converged upon by minor routes heading around the coastal lowland of the peninsula, Map 4.9. There are paths along and over the central body of Cefn Bryn, which forms the backbone of Gower. Several of the routes head towards coastal bays, such as Port Eynon, which would have been particularly accommodating for landing small vessels and for trade. Many of these minor routes, as indeed those of the lowland Vale of Glamorgan, were likely to have come into existence as cart tracks servicing open field systems. A good example of this can be seen in Oystermouth, where part of such a cart track has been incorporated into a modern road.[65]

New roads in the Middle Ages were usually created through habitual use, although for the most part Roman roads remained in use. During the revolt of Rhys ap Maredudd in 1270, steps were taken to ensure that the Roman road from Brecon to Llandovery was to be kept open, to allow up to 12,000 troops to pass through. The condition of this road at the time is not known, nor is it known whether the actual Roman road itself was in use or just its alignment that was followed. Whatever the case, 609 woodcutters were hired from Gloucester and worked for a day to prepare the road, four days later 12000 soldiers passed through Brecon and Trecastle.[66] It is tempting to imagine that the 609 woodcutters were cutting the wood to burn and create a stable dry surface of ash. There are other examples, most notably when a siege machine drawn by 40 oxen was taken from Carmarthen to Newcastle Emlyn; soldiers were sent in advance to prepare the roads so as the machine and oxen would not get bogged down.[67] This may have been the case, but in other conflicts involving the transport of siege machines logs were usually laid alongside one another to form a solid surface.

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[65] Weeks, R. (1998b) "Oystermouth, Gower", *Arch. Wales* 38, 144-5

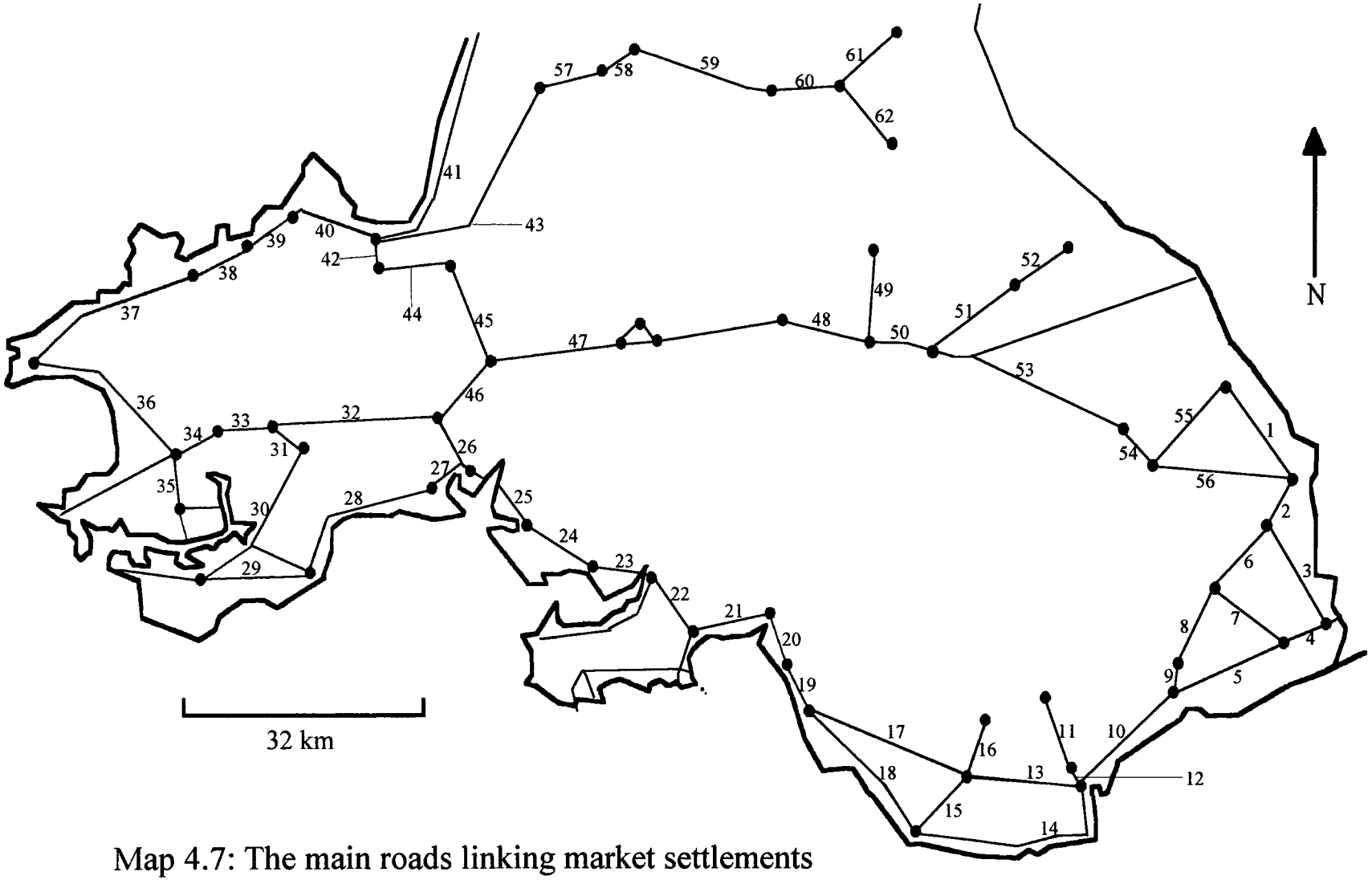
[66] PRO: SC11/4/18/1, 2, 3; Griffiths, R.A. (ed.) *Conquerors and Conquered in Medieval Wales*, 73

[67] *Ibid.*, 75

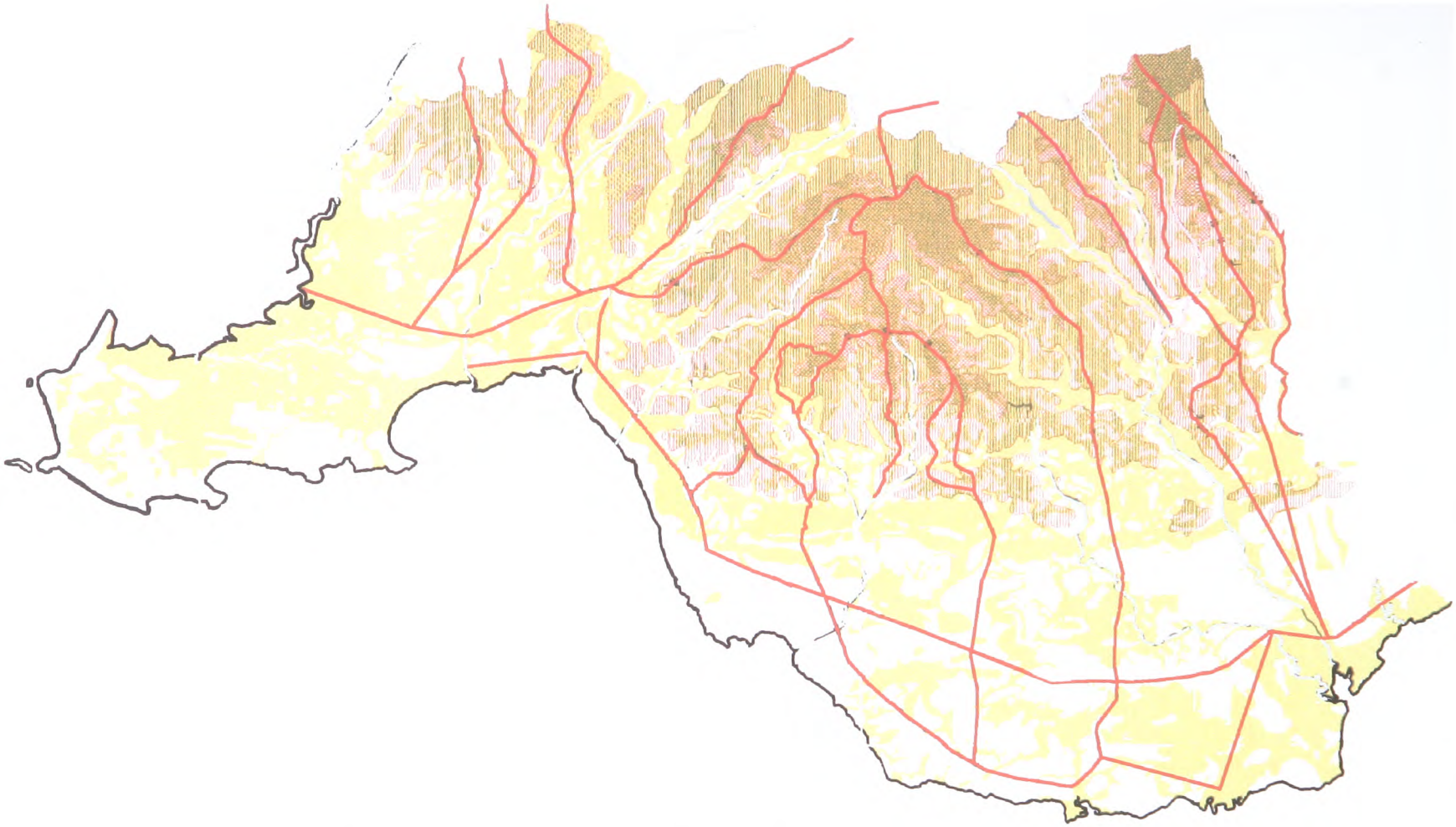
The goods and services found in towns are generally regarded as being forces of centrality, nonetheless many of the functions found in the new urban centres were not the sole preserve of the town. Before the Conquest, inhabitants of south Wales were trading widely and doing so through the open country landscape. This would have been common in the period from the departure of the Romans to the coming of the Normans. Isolated journeys would mean the creation of paths; journeys involving carts or droving animals could take place on such paths or on or alongside Roman roads. There is no reason to believe that this system would have come to an abrupt halt with the creation of the new towns. Therefore we could perhaps view two networks as being in operation; the one that linked the Norman settlements and the other that maintained long held traditions. On the ground, this could well have meant the use of the same roads for different purposes, as both forces occupied the same landscape and were integrated.

4.8 Medieval Road Transportation in South Wales

The topographical features of many trading settlements in the study area usually consisted of a single street leading from a castle to the town walls. The morphology of some Welsh medieval towns is likely to remain largely a subject of conjecture, due to the influence of later developments and the overall lack of archaeological research. In the case of some towns, notably Swansea, the blitz in the 1940s and later rebuilding provides an additional obstacle. The process of industrialisation has altered the character of many medieval towns. There are some notable exceptions, however, with one example being Trelech. Trelech was, by south Wales standards, a large town in the Middle Ages. Although when compared to the urban centres in some parts of England, it and other Welsh centres were quite small. Annual excavations in the decayed medieval town of Trelech have been led by Ray Howell who has viewed the town as being planned around a grid based on three main streets which would have accommodated burgages on either side.

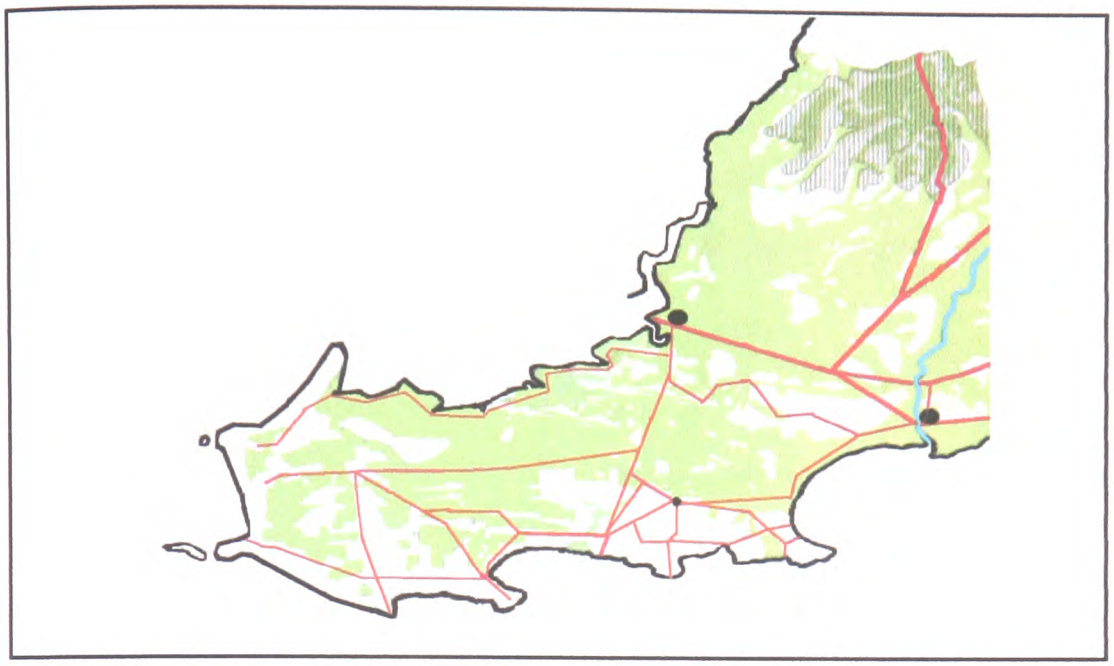


Map 4.7: The main roads linking market settlements



Map 4.8: Upland routes linking with the Vale of Glamorgan

Base map after RCAHMW



Map 4.9: A possible plan based on available evidence of the road system in Gower during the thirteenth century (Information added to a RCAHMW base map)

A recent examination by J. Wilson has challenged this assumption.[68] Wilson proposes a pattern of ribbon development along the main road through the village, a characteristic of many other Welsh medieval towns, with the classic example being Cowbridge. Those involved with the annual excavations at Trelech do not support this view, arguing that the earthworks that Wilson views as being an extension to the town represent farmsteads that were located beyond it.[69] Trelech differed from many other south Wales boroughs by being a relatively late foundation, a consequence of thirteenth century economic growth and the castle building programme in Glamorgan. Other, existing boroughs, reacted to that growth by adding extra tenements in a pattern of ribbon development beyond the town walls. There is strong evidence to suggest that Trelech was laid out in the mid-thirteenth century to perform a specific function as an iron production centre to support the castle building programme in

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[68] Wilson, J.C. (1998) "Trelech: A New Location for the Old Town", *Arch. Wales* 38, 67-70

[69] Hamilton, M. & Howell, R. (2000b) "Trelech: Geophysical Surveys", *Arch. Wales* 40, 114-9

Glamorgan.[70] Given its late creation, a more formal grid pattern would be more in keeping with a planned settlement, created to serve a specific purpose. The experience at other towns, Like Brecon and Usk, which had grown beyond their walls in the thirteenth century, may have been taken into account when Trelech was established.

A land route could be followed utilising in the old Roman road which enters Wales and takes in Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan, Swansea, Loughor and on to Pembrokeshire. This is almost certainly the route travelled by King John and his entourage during his visit to Ireland in 1210. The king was in Cardiff on 25 May 1210, a Tuesday, was at Margam the following Thursday before arriving at Swansea on the Saturday. He then proceeded to Haverfordwest, where a boat carried him on to Ireland. Later in the year there are surviving records of a journey by the king from Ireland coming back using the same route. On Tuesday 24 August 1210 he was at Dublin, the following Thursday at Fishguard, Friday he was in Haverfordwest and on the following day at Margam Abbey. He had reached Newport by Monday and it seems likely that from there he took a boat to Bristol.[71] G.T. Clark suggests that Margam must have been flourishing so as to bear the expense of hosting the king and his entourage.[72]

The monastic granges linked to the mother houses of Cistercian Abbeys have been identified as being generally about seven miles, or a days walk, away from the Abbey.[73] Initially this appears to be the case with the grange at Cillonydd, which is approximately seven miles away, uphill from Llantarnam Abbey. A routeway has

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[70] Howell, R. (2000b), 211-22; see also Penrose, R.L. (1997)

[71] *Clark Cartae*, no. 290, 292-3

[72] *Clark Cartae*, 293; see also *Clark Cartae* no. 287, 291a 1205 charter to Margam by King John

[73] Davies (1996), 47

been traced travelling from the Abbey at 30m OD to above 300m OD, this is intersected by Llanderfel farm which was a parochial chapel, pilgrimage cell and tavern during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A further four miles on from Cillonydd, existed another grange at Abercarn, exceeding the seven miles which may simply have been the case in the Vale of Glamorgan. There are other examples, with Llanhilleth being a little over five miles away, Mynyddislwyn approximately six miles and the Rhyswg being within two miles of the Cillonydd site.

In terms of how far people travelled, it is without doubt that greater distances could be covered on horseback, the most common method of travel for Welsh burgesses. This is indicated by a reference to 'one foot in the stirrup' at Cardiff which allowed burgesses to be exempt from attending court if they could prove they were leaving on business.[74] A horse and cart could also cover greater distances depending on the size of the load being carried. Travel by these methods would be much quicker along the coastal plains and, indeed, along the upland ridges running north, once the initial climb had been made, in the latter case especially rather than using the densely wooded valley floors. John Langdon has demonstrated that the twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw an increased use of horses as they provided an ideal way to travel swiftly to market. Horses also enabled land to be worked more quickly than with oxen and they were therefore attractive to ordinary people. The speed offered by the horse was seen by many as more advantageous to the power provided by oxen.[75]

In the case of merchants travelling between larger trading settlements it is probable that accommodation would have been available in taverns and the like along the most popular routes. Pilgrims are also likely to have benefited in this way. The journey from Llantarnam Abbey to Cillonydd grange could be made in a day, albeit

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[74] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* Cardiff 1147 - 83, 145

[75] Langdon, J. (1986) *Horses, Oxen and Technological Innovation*, (Cambridge, University Press)

uphill for most of the way. This journey would be easier on horseback but would still be difficult in some places. Llanderfel is located halfway up the hillside and would have undoubtedly provided shelter overnight for pilgrims and other travellers, especially if they had partaken of the local ale.[76] In the thirteenth century it was said that markets should be located no closer from one another than six and two thirds of a mile, the idea being that a day's journey would cover twenty miles and would be divided into three. The theory was that a merchant would spend the same amount of time at a market as it took him to get there - the time it took to travel six and two thirds of a mile - and the same amount of time over the same distance in order to return home.[77]

References to an everyday activity such as going from one town to another appear infrequently in extant sources, the journey of Gerald of Wales being the most notable exception.[78] There are other sources, and one of particular interest is a letter from Sir William de Montague to the king dated 11 March 1316. Montague had led a force into Wales to quell the rebellion of Llewelyn Bren and in doing so found that the bailiffs who had been instructed to bring footmen to aid the cause had neglected their duties. The letter to the king revealed that the bailiff of Gloucester had only brought 48 footmen when he had been instructed to bring one hundred. Montague suspected that the bailiffs had accepted money so as to 'leave the good ones at home'.[79] Of greater interest to the present study is the opening sentence of the letter which reads:

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[76] Weeks, R. (2002) "A Post-Dissolution Monastic Site and its Landscape: Cillonydd on Mynydd Maen", *Gw. Loc. Hist.* 92, 11

[77] Fox, H.S.A. (1973) "Going to Town in Thirteenth Century England", in Baker, A.R.H. & Harley, J.B. (eds.) *Man Made the Land*, 75; see also, Kowaleski (1995), 54

[78] Kightly, C. (1988) *A Mirror of Medieval Wales*, (Cardiff, Cadw)

[79] *Calendar of Chancery Warrants* (hereafter: *Cal. Chan. War.*) 1244 - 1326, 437

> 'Sire, we were this Saturday evening at Tryllek and will be at Neuport on Sunday 5 March, and on Monday following we will ride against your enemies with the grace of God.' [80]

This letter which, it can be assumed, was written on Saturday 4 March had already been received by the king in Nottinghamshire on 11 March. It is revealing in that the group travelled from Trelech to Newport - fifteen miles by the most direct route - in one day, as it would have been virtually impossible to travel at night, and presumably on horseback. Seemingly they travelled with fewer footmen, which could have slowed the group, than Montague would have liked. Montague did apparently succeed in adding more recruits. On 12 March he left Cardiff and headed for Caerphilly Castle. Riding alongside him were Sir Henry de Lancastre and Sir John de Giffard with one hundred and fifty men at arms and two thousand footmen.[81] Montague's account tells of how his force approached Caerphilly Castle and found Llewelyn Bren on the summit of a nearby mountain, having already blocked all roads to the castle. Montague's force went to the end of the mountain 'a good three leagues from the roads' after which Llewelyn and his force reportedly fled with those that remained being killed.[82]

In 1308 an unspecified sum of money was transported from Carmarthen castle to London. The reference is especially interesting here as it gives some indication of the time it would take to make a journey to the capital. The journey was estimated as lasting for eighteen days and cost 6*d.* a day. Three horses were taken, along with the additional cost of six foot soldiers who were paid 1*s* each and six archers who were paid 3*d* a day.[83] Ministers' accounts sometimes also give details of shorter journeys.

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[80] *Ibid.*,438

[81] *Ibid.*, 439

[82] *Ibid.*, 439

[83] PRO: SC6/1218/6

For example, two land surveyors, William de Heighton and William de Markton are recorded as having travelled from Glamorgan to Newport and then Caerleon to measure the land.[84] They later spent fifteen days at Usk and six days at Trelech along with six men who assisted them.[85]

Other men travelled in south Wales during the course of their work and their activities are sometimes recorded. Thomas Somercote was an auditor from Lincoln whose work meant that he travelled extensively. He visited south Wales several times in the early fourteenth century. He appears in ministers' accounts, which give some indication as to the distances he travelled and the duration of his visits to specific places. For example, Somercote travelled from Twyford to Usk to audit the accounts of the ministers there and stayed for twenty four days in 1316. For this he was paid 3*s* 4*d* a day.[86] In 1317 Thomas Somercote travelled from Lincoln to Brecon, a journey which appears to have taken him seven days. He stayed in Brecon for eleven days then travelled to Ogmore in one day where he stayed for three days before moving on to Kidwelly where he stayed for an unspecified duration. Somercote later headed back to Brecon once again before going to Monmouth which took thirteen days in all.[87]

Roads held a certain amount of political significance. An interesting dispute appears to have arisen in the early fourteenth century between the de Clare and the de Breos families, (the former holding the lordship of Glamorgan and the latter in possession of Gower). It seems that the king attempted to capitalise on the dispute by persuading the respective lords to declare the road between Cardiff and Swansea a

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[84] PRO: SC6/921/17

[85] PRO: SC6/926/30

[86] PRO: SC6/928/18

[87] PRO: SC6/1157/4

royal road and thereby giving the monarch a firm foothold in south Wales. This would have played a significant role in undermining Marcher lordship, and the proposal, the outcome of which has been lost, faced strong opposition, presumably to much disappointment from the king.[88]

The rebellion led by Llewelyn Bren left many towns devastated. Few recorded profits the following year with many burgages having been destroyed. There is, however, no evidence of Cowbridge being directly affected during the revolt. Cowbridge thrived as a market town, expanding beyond its walls in a pattern of ribbon development along the main south Wales highway, the Portway, both towards the east and the west.[89] Smaller roads also ran towards the north and the south, perhaps reflecting the medieval additions to a road pattern established by the Romans and made use of by the Anglo-Normans when the medieval town and borough were established. Cowbridge was undoubtedly linked to the boroughs of Llantrissant to the north and Llantwit to the south. In recent years scholars have pointed out that the River Thawe was not navigable as far as Cowbridge, in order to support the view that Cowbridge was a marketing centre for overland trade and supported a rural hinterland in the agriculturally rich Vale of Glamorgan.[90] Less attention has been paid to the role of Llantwit which may have served to provide Cowbridge and Llantrissant with imported goods. It already had the right of tolls from nearby ports such as at Barry, Aberthawe and Ogmore,[91] where trade was also likely to have been taking place, despite these settlements not formally possessing a borough charter. Indeed the distribution of south Wales boroughs points to an east west orientation, but most of the routeways run north/south, from the uplands and valleys to the lowland plains of

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[88] *Clark Cartae* II no.321

[89] Robinson, D.M. (1980b) *Cowbridge, The Archaeology and Topography of a Small Market Town in the Vale of Glamorgan* (Cardiff, Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust)

[90] *Ibid.*, 276

[91] *Cal. IPM* Vol. V no. 538, 334

the Vale of Glamorgan and the Gwent levels. Cardiff benefited from the might of Caerphilly Castle to its north which oversaw the commotal lordships of Senghenydd and Meisgyn and Glyn Rhondda and also acted as a barrier between the incomers and the native Welsh who had been evicted from the lowlands by the Anglo-Norman overlords. Llantrissant may have provided a similar function for Cowbridge, nevertheless it seems to have developed more of a role as a marketing town in its own right. This may have been a result of including the Welsh in its economic life, particularly in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, in much the same way as the Welsh who farmed the uplands of Neath were contributing to economic prosperity there. Certainly by 1379 there were Welshmen holding lands and tenements in Llantrissant, as is evidenced by a quitclaim issued by Nest ap Kenewrec to Grono ap Ivor Hir on 12 September that year.[92] Imported goods landed at Llantwit could easily be sold at the port or at Cowbridge, which offered the opportunity of distributing goods quickly throughout Glamorgan in any direction. This could well account for why Cowbridge was not attacked during the revolts by the Welsh. As soon as Llantrissant was attacked people in Cowbridge would have soon known about it. Messengers on horseback could quickly have alerted authorities in Cardiff and the other towns in order to mobilise troops who would have set out to join the Portway, the route that Cowbridge lays directly along. Risking incursions deeper into Glamorgan territory would have been suicidal for the Welsh who would have sustained casualties in Llantrissant. The alternative was to attack several towns at the same time, which occurred during the 1316 revolt, but without word as to how the campaign was progressing elsewhere it was still a gamble to raid as far as Cowbridge.

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[92] *Clark Cartae* no. 1045, 1345

4.9 The Road System in 1400

The great change in the road system of south Wales by 1400 is directly related to the creation of new towns and villages. In the early twelfth century, the new colonists in south Wales would not have conceived their settlement arrangements in terms of reciprocity between town and country. Lacking an urban tradition prior to the Conquest, the siting of the new towns only represented the thinnest thread of continuity from the Roman settlement but the decisive factor was the existing Roman road system.[93] Roman settlements occupied optimum locations and the Norman town builders were have been faced with similar considerations. There would undoubtedly been a long tradition of the Roman routes being used in the early Middle Ages and even where the road surface was badly cut up it was not uncommon for a medieval trackway to form alongside. A prime example can be seen along Llanhennock ridge from Caerleon to Usk where a holloway runs parallel to a Roman road. Leighton may consider that in mainland Europe Roman roads fell into disuse because they did not lead where people wanted to go,[94] but in south Wales during the Middle Ages this was patently not the case. Even today, some of the most significant south Wales roads follow Roman alignments for a substantial part of their course.

One of the aims of this thesis is to argue that through the study period a model can be described where initially autonomous open country settlements and farmsteads were integrated into a regional network, within and between lordships, of rural commodity producers and consumers growing increasingly dependent on the retail goods and services found in the market towns. 1400 is used as a cut off point due to the Glyndŵr rebellion which was the culmination of a series of processes and events which ravaged the south Wales economy. The revolt of Llewelyn Bren in 1316 caused the economy to falter, the climatic extremes of 1315-22 added to this, with both rural

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[93]Carter, H. 1965) *The Towns of Wales - A Study in Urban Geography* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press)

[94] Leighton, A.C. (1978) *Transport and Communication in Early Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press) 51-2

and urban areas suffering. Parts of Monmouth were flooded and in outlying districts crops were lost. The reign of the Despensers, who succeeded the de Clares as Marcher lords in much of south east Wales, was a turbulent one with soldiers from neighbouring lordships being drawn into a damaging conflict that affected the whole region.[95] The Glyndŵr revolt directly affected many south Wales towns and was the final event that sent the economy reeling into long term decline. This would have led to a decrease in the use of many of the routes that came into existence between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. The main highways created by the Romans would have remained prominent. However as trade into towns decreased, some of the multitude of routes linking rural, particularly upland, areas with towns would have fallen into disuse. The situation would not have reverted to the state it was in *c.*1100; there would have been more 'main' routes linking towns, which would have remained in use. These same routes would be used by drovers taking cattle to market and would be so badly degraded by the seventeenth century that local residents, such as Valentine Morris in Chepstow, would campaign for action, their efforts culminated in the turnpike acts.[96]

4.10 Conclusion

Building roads in the Middle Ages would have been labour intensive, time consuming and expensive. It would also yield little direct profit and so there was no great programme of new road construction between the twelfth century and the beginning of the fifteenth. This does not mean that no new roads were deliberately engineered. At Tintern, a road known locally as the 'Stony Way' due to its cobbled surface, dates from the Middle Ages and is associated with the Abbey. There are several instances, like the one at Brecon described above, where roads were prepared in advance of a marching army. It seems that the motivation to deliberately build a

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[95] Conway Davies, J. (1915) "The Despenser War in Glamorgan", *Trans. Roy. Hist. Soc.* 9, 21

[96] Waters, I. (1964) *The Unfortunate Valentine Morris* (Chepstow, Chepstow Society); Weeks, R. forthcoming "Transport and Communications", in Gray, M. & Morgan, P. (eds.) *Gwent County History: Gwent 1536-1780* (Cardiff, UWP)

road was dependent on the manpower, the resources, wealth and on necessity. Of the various groups in society, this would inevitably be the military and the monasteries. The king would derive no benefit from paying for road construction out of the royal purse and the barons would have been loathe to do so also. Therefore, for the most part it, was convenient to use Roman roads and where there were none to let holloways form.

By 1400 the road system that had re-emerged and developed and which had been at its height in the thirteenth century was gradually falling into decline. It is ironic that the rebels who attacked the towns in the Glyndŵr revolt not only attacked the Norman imposed towns but used the highways used by the Normans with which to do it. The devastation that ensued sapped the impetus for growth and the regional networks disintegrated. For the first time during the thirteenth century, at the height of the towns prosperity, a recognisable road system would have been in existence that was not dissimilar to that which we have today. This is reflective of the fact that despite changing man made practices the constant factor is the enduring physical base.

In answer to Beresford's questions it seems logical, given the findings above, both from this chapter and the previous two, that the poor quality of inland transport did slow down the movement of traffic. However, it does not appear that this necessarily shortened the journey that countrymen were able to make to market. What is not known is whether ordinary people were compelled to use certain markets within their own lordship, even if it meant by-passing a nearer market in a neighbouring one. A host of small trading centres did exist, but this was as much due to the nature of the Conquest and of Marcher lordship itself as the effects of transport costs. Therefore on this issue several factors were at work.

Chapter Five

River Transportation and Maritime Transport and Trade in South Wales

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will commence with a consideration of river navigation in the Middle Ages. In England the debate over the use of rivers in relation to the road network has been a dynamic theme and therefore deserves consideration here. This chapter will subsequently review the work of J.F. Edwards relating to Wales, highlighting some errors and omissions that he made and assessing the value of his findings. This will be followed by an examination of the types of vessels that were used before looking at coastal transport and small ports, urban ports and those ports that were expected to support military campaigns by sea. The conclusion will discuss which navigable rivers in south Wales were actually being used in the study period. It will also answer the fifth of Beresford's questions. Beresford asked whether the poor quality of local transport and the difficulties of coastal navigation prevented a single port from dominating the economy of the region. This chapter will examine inland navigation and coastal transport alongside the findings of the previous chapters to provide that answer in the context of south Wales.

The earliest reference to river transport in south Wales comes from the Domesday Book - one of the few of its references relevant to the present study. It refers to boats using the Wye to reach Chepstow.[1] To date, the only in depth study of medieval river transport in Wales is that which was carried out by J. F Edwards in 1987.[2] He wrote:

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[1] Moore, J.S. (ed.) (1982) *Domesday Book Gloucestershire* (Chichester, Phillimore)

[2] Edwards, J.F. (1987) *The Transport System of Medieval England and Wales - A Geographical Synthesis* unpublished PhD. thesis, 2 vols. University of Salford

> 'Compared with England, there was very little inland navigation along the Welsh rivers during the medieval period. The mountainous interior of the country produces, in general, fast flowing and steeply descending rivers which precluded much penetration by medieval vessels.'[3]

Interestingly, Edwards did not include the Wye and Monnow as Welsh rivers. Instead they are included among the list of English rivers. In the context of the present study it is essential that they both be considered in relation to their impact on south Wales. This is because geographically the Monnow is most certainly within Wales, as are the western banks of the River Wye, upon which are to be found the medieval settlements of Chepstow, Tintern, Monmouth, Hay and Builth. Edwards was concerned with identifying which rivers were navigable and was less clear on establishing whether rivers identified as being navigable were actually being used.

5.2 The Study of Medieval River and Coastal Transport

B.P. Hindle and J.F. Edwards, have argued for a well integrated road and river system during the Middle Ages which facilitated economic growth.[4] This research considered the road and river systems as a network and used published primary documentary source material such as Patent Rolls, Close Rolls, Liberate Rolls and Fine Rolls as the main data source. Their work has not gone unchallenged and John Langdon is particularly critical of their choice of sources and of their findings regarding the extent of inland river navigation.[5] Langdon believes that, far from complementing each other, the road and river systems often competed with each other. Drawing on evidence from sheriffs' purveyance accounts, Langdon argued that several of the rivers that Edwards and Hindle identified as being navigable may not

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[3] *Ibid.*, 348

[4] Edwards & Hindle (1991) *passim*

[5] Langdon, J. (1993) 'Inland Water Transport in Medieval England', *J. Hist. Geog.* 19, 1 - 11

have been during the Middle Ages. Unfortunately there are no surviving medieval purveyance accounts for south Wales and it may have been the case that none were ever compiled as the region was outside royal jurisdiction for much of the time.[6] One of the problems Langdon had with Edwards's hypothesis was in the interpretation of the documents he used, as some of the entries cited were rather ambiguous.[7] In response Edwards and Hindle refuted Langdon's opposing view and stood by their claims, issuing a challenge to 'examine the evidence' on which they based their conclusions.[8]

The debate has moved on whilst this research project was in progress. Evan Jones has re-examined the arguments and offered a more sensitive appraisal of the evidence and of the debate.[9] Jones concludes that, whilst the approach taken by Edwards and Hindle was 'useful and valid', that there were 'fundamental errors' in their interpretation and analysis. This he attributes to their treatment of the Middle Ages as an homogenous period.[10] Jones believes that when the evidence is placed within a tighter chronological framework it becomes apparent that there was a decline in the extent of England's navigable river network during the later Middle Ages.[11] In his response to this paper, Langdon concedes some of the points raised and has 'no problem' with a reduction in the use of river navigation due to obstructions and other factors as the period progressed. Interestingly, Langdon suggests that the debate has focused too much on the perspective of boat people using rivers and that more attention should be paid to the reasons behind the use of rivers and the reasons why a

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[6] *Ibid.*, 2

[7] *Ibid.*, 8

[8] Edwards, J. & Hindle, B.P. (1993) 'Comment: Inland Water Transport in Medieval England', *J. Hist. Geog.* 19, 12-14

[9] Jones, E.T. (2000) 'River Navigation in Medieval England', *J. Hist. Geog.*, 26, 1, 60 - 82

[10] *Ibid.*, 60

[11] *Ibid.*, 82

reduction in their use took place. He then goes on to discuss the use of mills and their influence as an impediment to water transport .[12]

The debate as to whether roads and rivers complemented or competed with each other is less pertinent in Wales than in England. Of the forty or so Welsh medieval market settlements in south Wales, more than twenty occupy coastal locations. Today, only two south Wales rivers are classified by the Environment Agency as being navigable for boats, the River Wye and the River Lugg.[13] Undoubtedly the medieval traveller would have been far less restricted in terms of which rivers they chose to use. Additionally, it should be remembered that rivers served other purposes apart from transport that would offer advantages when establishing a settlement. These included: a fresh supply of water for domestic use, for animals, to power mills and also to mark boundaries and for defensive and political purposes.

5.3 A Comment on the Navigable Rivers of South Wales Identified by Edwards

The table below is derived from Edwards's research. It breaks the information down into a simple table which details the river concerned, the extent to which it was navigable and the source that was cited to justify the selection. The approach employed by Edwards was to give a descriptive account, based on the evidence from the various State Rolls. As described above, this approach presented a picture of widespread use of rivers in England that some authorities could not accept, responding that there would have been obstructions to such passage. There are few references of obstructions to navigation on Welsh rivers. Those that do exist, however, tend to be of interest. One of the most notable examples comes from 1314

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[12] Langdon, J. (2000) 'Inland Water Transport in Medieval England - the view from the Mills: a response to Jones' *J. Hist. Geog.*, 26, 1 pp,75-82

[13] Environment Agency, *personal correspondence*

when, in the year of his demise, Gilbert de Clare constructed a weir across the whole width of a section of the River Wye. This in turn prevented ships from reaching Monmouth and Hereford and the numerous small ports in between.[14]

Name of River	Distance Navigable	Source Cited
Wye	63 miles to Hereford	Cal. Pat. Roll. 1292 - 1301
Usk	20 miles to Usk town	Cal. Clo. Roll. 1296-1302, 81-83; 100-102; Clo. Roll. 1341-3, 485-8; Clo. Roll. 1323-7, 183-4
Taff	2 miles to Cardiff	Hadfield, C. (1967) The Canals of South Wales and the Border p.15
Neath	5 miles to Aberdulais	*Ibid.*
Tawe	4 miles to Morriston	*Ibid.*
Loughor	4 miles to Pontardulais	*Ibid.*
Taf	7 miles to St. Clears	*Ibid.*
Gwendraeth	3 miles to Kidwelly	Cal. Clo. Roll. 1296 - 1302 p.83
Towy	10 miles to Carmarthen	Cal. Lib. Roll. 1240-45 p.276
Teifi	14 miles to Cenarth	Cal. Pat. Roll. 1313-1317 p. 99
Pembroke	10 miles to Pembroke	Cal. Clo. Roll. 1296-1302 p.63
Western Cleddau	21 miles to Haverfordwest	Cal. Clo. Roll. 1296-1302 p.500
Eastern Cleddau	20 miles to Canaston Bridge	Hadfield (1967) op. cit. p. 15

Table 5.1: A table summarising the results relevant to south Wales from J.F. Edwards's investigation into the navigable rivers in Wales.

One interesting reference to a complaint from the 1270s concerns Cilgerran's fisheries on the River Teifi which were impeding river transport to the town of Cardigan. At least six weirs were located below the castle in the later Middle Ages. Specifically, boats carrying timber and stone to Cardigan castle were being obstructed and it was ordered that the fish-traps be removed, or else destroyed. They were rebuilt in 1314 by John de Hastings who was charged with ensuring that they did not interfere with shipping.[15] Hastings was, it seems, successful for quite some time as it

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[14] *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous* (Chancery) (hereafter: *Cal. Inq. Misc.)* II, 48-9; *Cal. Anc. Pet.*, 67

[15] NLW: Bettisfield MS. 1306, see also pp.115-6

was not until the 1340s that complaints re-surfaced about Cilgerran's weirs. By that time the Cilgerran fisheries were regarded as the most profitable in Wales but this did not stop Edward I destroying them due to their hindrance of river traffic. The fishery was later permitted to rebuild its weirs, on the understanding that sufficient passage should be left for ships and boats.[16]

An interesting example of the debate over navigability in a Welsh context involves Usk. Evidence from the Close Rolls indicates that vessels capable of carrying 40 *tunnes*, could reach the town of Usk.[17] As Edwards was aware, Usk was first listed as a port in 1297 and the Close Roll of 1324 suggests that ships with this carrying capacity were docking there.[18] This would imply that the Usk was navigable for twenty miles. Today it is not possible for boats of this size to travel so far up the River Usk with the depth of the river being far too shallow to allow for passage. As a result of this Courtney regards the evidence from the 1324 Close Roll as dubious and, citing the predominantly local ceramic assemblage, proposes that whilst smaller boats may have been used, larger sea going vessels - of the size mentioned in the Close Roll - could not have reached the town.[19] The 1324 Close Roll should not be dismissed out of hand, however, and it is by no means in isolation in mentioning Usk as a port for sea going vessels. A second source from 1342 makes a similar statement which supports the view that such a feat was possible.[20] The fact that Usk cannot be reached by large boats today does not discount it from being possible more than six hundred years ago. Subsequent silting up of the river, that did not act as a barrier in the

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[16] *Cal. Pat. Roll.* 1313-17, 127

[17] By comparison Haverford had ships with the capacity of 250 *tunnes* docking there. see *Cal. Pembs. Rec.* I, 126-7

[18] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1296-1302, 81-83; *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1323-27, 125; PRO: E134/22/12

[19] Courtney, P. (1994), 114

[20] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1341-42, 85-88

fourteenth century, may have acted to prevent such activities in the modern period. The river channel as it passes the town is capable of sustaining much more water than it does at present, but this is largely as a result of a programme of flood defences implemented in the 1970s. Despite there being no surviving documented instances of sea going boats reaching Usk, there are accounts that mention goods being off-loaded at Bertholey, a short distance below the town. Among the items deposited there in 1348/9 were barrels of herring and stockfish, as well as supplies of barley and malt.[21] This may have been due to it no longer being possible for boats to reach Usk in 1348, or alternatively it could simply have been one of many places to dock a vessel along a busy river bank.

Overall, the present author has no quarrel with the findings from the study of calendared accounts regarding south Wales. There are also no major problems with the extent of navigation, listed by Hadfield, as being representative of the situation in the Middle Ages.[22] The topography of most of the rivers concerned would have allowed no substantially greater penetration by boats in the Middle Ages than they do today, although there may have been some interesting differences. For example, Hadfield was not writing in terms of the extent of medieval river navigation - he was instead concerned with tracing the growth of canals with industrialisation. Had he been then he may have noted that the Taff, as well as the Ely (which was not mentioned by Edwards) were in fact both navigable for three miles, as far as Llandaff[23] and not the two miles to Cardiff that is quoted by Edwards citing Hadfield. Additionally, both Edwards and Hadfield over-looked the River Ritec in Pembrokeshire that appears to have been an influence on the citing of early medieval

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[21] PRO: E101/93/6

[22] Hadfield, C. (1967) *The Canals of South Wales and the Border*, (Newton Abbot, David & Charles), 15

[23] *Clark Cartae* no. 289, 293

settlement and which was still being used in the twentieth century.[24] The possibility should be considered that the River Thaw was navigable as far as Cowbridge. There is no firm evidence either way, certainly it would have been - and still is - possible to sail coracles on the Thaw. The use of the River Monnow for river transport should also be considered. It links Grosmont and Monmouth and smaller vessels may have been used between these two settlements.

As can be seen in Table 5.2 (below) the cost of road transport tended to be much higher than river transport.[25] Hence, river transport could prove very economical. It was less useful for droving animals, but far more suited for transporting other commodities as there was less chance of breakages compared with road transport. There is also evidence of iron ore being shipped along the Severn estuary. A quantity of iron ore was discovered on the Magor Pill boat, and J.R.L. Allen has proposed several locations as to where it could have been destined along the Severn.[26]

The cost of carrying wine by water and road, per tun, per mile (pence) up the Severn

	Water transport	*Road transport*
1308/9	0.4	2.5
1452/53	0.6	3.2

Table 5.2: The relative costs of road and river transport up the River Severn (After Dyer, 1994, 262)

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[24] Campbell, E. & Lane, A. (1993) "Excavations at Longbury Bank, Dyfed, and Early Medieval Settlement in South Wales", *Med. Arch.* 37, 15 -77

[25] For a discussion see Masschaele, J. (1993), 266 - 179

[26] Allen, J.R.L. (1996) "A Possible Trade in Iron Ores in the Severn Estuary of South west Britain", *Med. Arch.* 60, 226-30

5.4 Vessels on Navigable Rivers

In order to identify a river as being 'navigable' it first needs to be established as to what type of vessel would be used. Unfortunately, very little is known about the types of vessel that would have been operating on rivers during the Middle Ages.[27] Historical descriptions are rare and the wooden construction of the vessels themselves mean that archaeological evidence is limited. There are, however, some local examples of boat finds. The Magor Pill boat, a wreck measuring seven metres in length and three and a half metres in width, discovered in 1994 was dated to *c.*1240. It is thought to have been capable of navigating larger rivers due to its shallow draught, as well as coping with the open sea. It could easily have travelled up-river to Monmouth or Caerleon, as well as participating in cross-channel trade to Bristol or further afield.[28] Magor Pill was not, however, the first major south Wales medieval boat find. That had occurred at Alexandra dock in Newport in the 1870s and was reported in 1878. Contemporary descriptions discuss a clinker built vessel with caulking of vegetable tar, wool and horse hair.[29] The boat remains were not subjected to scientific analysis until the 1980s by which time much of the vessel had been lost with only a plank fragment remaining. Radiocarbon determination revealed a possible date range between the ninth and eleventh centuries, although the sample was not related to outer ring growths, the addition of which could indicate a date within the twelfth or thirteenth centuries.[30]

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[27] For the limited evidence of medieval boats in London see: Marsden, P. (1996) *Ships of the Port of London, twelfth to seventeenth centuries AD* Archaeological Report 5 (London, English Heritage) esp. 23-35

[28] Redknap, R. "The Historical and Archaeological Significance of the Magor Pill Boat" in Nayling, N. (1998) *The Magor Pill Medieval Wreck* (York, CBA), 151; see also Redknap, M. (1997-8) "An Archaeological and Historical Context for the Magor Pill Boat", *Maritime Wales* 19, 9-29

[29] Hutchinson, G. (1984) "A Plank Fragment from a Boat Find from the River Usk at Newport", *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 13, 27-32; see also Hutchinson, G. (1994) *Medieval Ships and Shipping* (Leicester, University Press)

[30] Hutchinson (1984), 32

In Wales the coracle was in widespread use, first being mentioned in the seventh century text the *Gododdin*. Today coracle fishing is only practiced on the Teifi, the Towy and the Taf, however it was undoubtedly used far more widely during the Middle Ages. Within recorded history, it is known that coracles were being used on the Severn, the Eastern Cleddau, the Wye, the Usk, the Dyfi, the Nevern, the Loughor and the Monnow. Coracles could be identified to a particular river based on their design. In the twelfth century coracles were a familiar sight to Gerald of Wales who made use of them to cross rivers whilst travelling with Archbishop Baldwin during his journey of 1188.[31] These vessels were not really suitable for carrying bulky goods, or indeed, more than two people at any one time. If rivers that were navigable for coracles were taken into account then the list of navigable south Wales rivers would probably be greater than those in Table 5.1. However, these were not trading vessels in the strictest sense and so such a classification would not be appropriate here.

Some documentary references exist as to the use of rivers in the study period, usually in relation to boating and fishing rights. In 1306 boating rights on the River Wye at Chepstow were worth 12*s*. to the lord, who had granted permission for seventeen boats to fish there that year.[32] By 1337/8, 20*s*. were being received for fishing rights on the River Tawe at Swansea.[33] Tolls were also levied on the River Usk at Caerleon for boats who wished to fish there,[34] the cost of hiring a boat on the River Usk being 7*d*.[35]

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[31] Jenkins, J.G. (1988) *The Coracle* (Carmarthen, Golden Grove)

[32] PRO: SC6/921/23

[33] Arundel Castle MS: W1m.3

[34] PRO: SC6/921/5 and PRO: SC6/928/21

[35] PRO: SC6/927/24

5.5 Coastal Transport and Small Ports

The prominence of sea borne transport in furnishing the conquest of south Wales and later in supplying the new towns, points to a more extensive use of small port locations than has recently been suggested.[36] There were numerous convenient landing places along the south Wales coastline where merchants plying their trade in the Bristol channel could land. Such ports may not necessarily have possessed elaborate port facilities and structures, or institutions like markets and fairs, however market towns often benefited from trading activity at sheltered bays by charging tolls on boats that landed on their stretch of coastline. Invariably some of the goods brought ashore may have ended up in the weekly markets held at the larger towns.[37]

Any number of beaches could have provided a safe place to land, as well as to launch smaller vessels. The Magor Pill boat has been linked to the documented port of *Abergwaitha*. The excavator of the boat, Nigel Nayling, believes that *Abergwaitha* would have been little more than a recognised landing place rather than consisting of any elaborate structures.[38] Trade almost certainly took place at such landing places but as such would have been undocumented. There is some evidence that a trading community may have existed at Magor in the early fourteenth century, near the port of *Abergwaitha*. Returns in an inquisition from 1327 reveal that income was being received from a wide range of activities there.[39] In a recent study of medieval coastal communities in south Devon, H.S.A. Fox has shown how informal trade was taking place at the seashore. Fox was primarily concerned with the trade in fish, but some of

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[36] Kowaleski, M. (2000a) "Port Towns: (a) England and Wales 1300 - 1540", in Palliser, D.M. (ed.) *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* volume 1 600 -1540, 467 - 549

[37] PRO: C133/77/3

[38] Nigel Nayling at the 1998 Severn Estuary Levels Research Committee conference at the Caerleon Campus, UWCN

[39] PRO: C135/2/18

the sources cited suggest that other goods were being traded too.[40] Sheltered bays such as Port Eynon in Gower could have provided a safe place to land and re-launch boats in much the same way as it does today and other locations such as Barry and Ogmore are documented as having done so.[41] Research at the medieval farmstead at Llanelen in north Gower has provided two possibilities for the imported wine vessels found during excavations there: that wine may have been brought in directly by boat to Llanrhidian, or else purchased at market at nearby Loughor and then transported by road.[42] The period of time for which such 'unofficial' landing places were used may have been short lived and related to the 'boom' of the late thirteenth century. For example, an entry in an inquisition of 1327 lists 'the port of Abergwaitha now wholly deserted.'[43]

5.6 Urban Ports

Urban port facilities were likely to have been of great importance and this is demonstrated in Cardiff, where a charter records that tolls should be charged on entering the town, 'as well by land as by sea' which suggests that maritime traffic was the accepted route for people and goods entering and leaving the town. The importance of sea borne trade to these coastal settlements is attested to in a late twelfth century charter to the town of Pembroke, a portion of which reads:

> 'That all ships which enter with merchandise into the port of Milford shall come to Pembroke bridge, if they wish to buy or sell in the land, and shall there buy and sell. But if they are unwilling (to trade), they shall wait their breeze at the cross, paying their lawful customs.

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[40] Fox, H.S.A. (2001) *The Evolution of the Fishing Village: Landscape and Society along the South Devon Coast, 1086-1550* (Leicester, Leopard's Head) 88-90

[41] PRO: C133/77/3

[42] Schlesinger, A. *et al* (1996) "An Early Church and Medieval Farmstead Site: Excavations at Llanelen Gower", *Arch. Journal* 153, 104-47

[43] PRO: C135/2/18

> And that all merchandise which is bought in the county of Pembroke to be exported to England, must be shipped at Pembroke bridge, or at Tynebia (Tenby) on payment of their customs.'[44]

Sea borne trade was undoubtedly of great importance to south Wales boroughs, with goods moving both across and along the Severn Estuary, facilitating trade between England, Wales, Ireland and the rest of Europe. In 1317, the earl of Pembroke, Aylmer de Valencia, lost a ship, the *Coga de Valencia*, to pirates off the coast of France. The ship contained wine from Bordeaux, along with wheat, cloth, armour and other goods valued at £133, 6*s.* 8*d.* with six rolls of cloth for sails valued at 40*s.* a roll and £60 worth of armour.[45] This would have been a considerable financial loss, especially when considering that during the same year £218, 10*s.* 2*d.* was set aside in order to provision all of the castles in Glamorgan.[46] Pirates also operated in the waters closer to home, as is revealed in 1325 when a ship carrying arms and provisions for the supply of south Wales castles was seized by Scottish rebels soon after departing from Haverford where it had been loaded with supplies.[47]

Early on in the conquest of south Wales, the bringing in of provisions by boat ensured greater reliability in terms of supply, with less opportunity for the consignment to be intercepted by the Welsh. The Pipe Roll of 1184-85 presents strong written evidence that towns such as Cardiff, Kenfig, Newport and Neath were all operating ships, with Neath castle being provisioned by a garrison and arms which arrived in six ships.[48] Cross channel communication between the south Wales ports

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[44] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* 1154 -89 Pembroke, 169

[45] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1317, 563-4

[46] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1317, 405

[47] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1325, 291

[48] *Clark Cartae* 171, 170 -76

and Bristol was then a frequent occurrence. Cardiff castle, along with other castles in Glamorgan, obtained provisions from Bristol, as was recorded in 1322. Listed amongst other items and arms, were 20 *tunnes* of wine and 150 quarters of salt imported for the castles of Glamorgan.[49]

At this time south Wales was still feeling the effects of the rebellion of Llewelyn Bren, during which many towns were devastated. Consequently this led to an increased reliance on imports and the order for provisions from Bristol reflects this. Courtney has argued that many of the south Wales ports were dependent on Bristol as a distant high order centre.[50] Bristol was a port and trading centre of national and international importance during the Middle Ages.[51] This importance is exemplified when it was the only named town in England permitted by the king to export wool. Redcliffe and Ham Green ware pottery from Bristol turns up frequently in south Wales excavations and the influence of Bristol on south Wales and of south Wales on Bristol was considerable, as the holdings of Margam Abbey at the Bristol market suggest.[52] Trading links extended as far as Haverford, where numerous items were exported for sale at market in Bristol including 300 rabbit skins to the value of £11 9*s.* 2*d* in 1278.[53] Rural life in England and Wales had been suffering during this period, as a result of the agricultural crises and subsequent famine which is closely identified with series of particularly harsh winters and wet summers covering the period from 1315 into the early 1320s.[54] In south east Wales, the rivers Wye and

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[49] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1322, 423

[50] Courtney (1994) 114

[51] Carus-Wilson, E.M. (1941) "An Industrial Revolution in the Thirteenth Century", *Ec. Hist. Rev.*, original series, 11, 39 - 60

[52] See Chapter Six 'The Monastic Influence on Transport and Trade"

[53] PRO: SC6/1207/11

[54] Kershaw, I. (1973) "The Great Famine and Agrarian Crises in England 1315 -22" *Past & Present* 59, 1 - 50

Monnow flooded their neighbouring settlements as is shown by the uncovering of layers of silt during excavation of burgages, with tenements in Monnow Street, Monmouth being abandoned as a result.[55]

By the early thirteenth century merchants from Chepstow to Newport and Cardiff as far as Swansea and Pembrokeshire were part of a trading community operating in the Severn estuary and the Irish Sea, although they may have been part of such a community for a considerable time before this. Boats from south Wales were visiting Irish shores in the pre-Conquest period.[56] In 1216 a ship from Cardiff was arrested in Pembroke, carrying 'wines and chattels' belonging to the men of Dublin and Drogheda.[57] In 1308 the king appointed Bernard Pee de Fer to the office of gauger of wines throughout Wales, and in 1310 notices were issued specifically directed towards the bailiffs and men of the towns of Haverford, Chepstow, Swansea and Tenby.[58] In itself, this reveals that wine was passing through these ports. In Swansea the 1306 charter had a provision whereby the lord would benefit from every ship bringing in more than thirty *tunnes* of wine from foreign parts.[59] Such a provision would not have been made unless it was a frequent occurrence. On 11 August 1335 two ships, the *Nicholas* and the *Blithe*, were being held at Swansea port carrying more than 160 *tunnes* of wine between them.[60] The wine trade was likely to

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[55] Clarke, S. (1991) "The Origins of Medieval Pottery in South East Wales", *Medieval Ceramics* 15, 29-36; see also Jackson, R. & Jackson, P. (1991) "Recent Archaeological Work in Monmouth", *Arch. Wales* 31, 7-9

[56] Jones, T. (1949) *Hen Longau Llongwyr Cymru - Old Ships and Sailors of Wales* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press)

[57] *Clark Cartae* no. 348, 348

[58] *Cal. Pat Roll.* 1313 - 17,220; see also Kissock, J.A. (1991a) "The Evidence for Wine Consumption at Llanelen, Gower, *c.* 1300", *Journal of Wine Research*, 2, 203-8.

[59] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* 1306, 332

[60] The *Nicholas* had the larger carrying capacity of the two holding 100 *tunnes* of wine, see PRO: E101/19/14/4

have been well established within south Wales by this time. As early as 1216 boats operated by Cardiff burgesses were involved in shipping wine to Ireland. The two year 'delay' in officially notifying the named towns of the appointment of Pee de Fer as gauger of wines may be due to the fact, that soon after his appointment in March 1308 he was sent to Scotland 'on the king's service'. In his absence his deputies, Roger Burel and John Avery, both from Haverford, took over his duties prior to his return sometime before March 1310.[61]

In Swansea, the maritime influence on everyday life is especially apparent. Early charters to the town specify the rights allocated to burgesses. These included, '. . . oaks for making their houses and fences and ships, yielding for each ship 1*s*., and all other timber for their fire and for all their easements and to take away and sell wherever they wish and can.'[62] Swansea burgesses were permitted to build and have up to four large ships, 'continuously and in succession' and as many smaller ships, in this instance capable of carrying less than twenty *tunnes*, as they pleased. Provision was made so that these ships were not to be sold to any stranger without permission from the lord or his steward.[63] Procedures concerning right of wreck were also laid down, an appropriate measure given the large bay and estuary where the Tawe meets the sea. The right of wreck provision reads as follows: ' . . .and if when the sea is ebbing they find wreck below high water mark, half shall be mine and half theirs, and if they find wreck on dry ground, the whole is mine', [64] which perhaps reflects the value of cargo that ships operating in and around Swansea possessed.

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[61] *Cal. Pat. Roll.* 1307 - 13,120 &, 146; Kissock, J.A. (1991a) 205

[62] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* 1153 -84 Swansea, 54

[63] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* 1306, 69

[64] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* 1153 - 84 Swansea, 238

The 1306 Swansea charter records the provision of a ferry across the Tawe by the lord which the burgesses were free to use, it reads:

> '. . . we grant also that Swansea ferry shall be forever at the service of all and singular the aforesaid burgesses and those of their mainpast and their animals and all their possessions without payment of fare save the common collection of sheaves which the ferryman shall make, if he pleases, at harvest time. And if any of the aforesaid shall refuse to pay sheaves when requested, they shall pay the fare if they wish to cross. And if the said ferryman is convicted of negligence he shall be punished for his faults.'[65]

Appropriately in the Duchy of Lancaster ministers' accounts, there is mention of a second ferry service on the other side of Gower linking Loughor to Llanelli. This too, it seems, was subject to the same conditions as those laid out in the 1306 charter.[66]

5.7 Military Campaigns by Sea

Sailors from the March came under royal protection on the high seas as the king had royal prerogative over the sea. In December 1316 Edward II was raising troops to campaign in Ireland against the Scots.[67] A writ of aid was issued on 18 December for John de Norton, the king's clerk, who was to seek twenty ships from the ports of Bristol and Haverford and 'every port in between,' in order to convey 150 horsemen and 500 footmen to Ireland. On 20 December a mandate was sent to the king's chamberlain of south Wales which required him to help provide ships and finance from his bailiwick. If sufficient ships and finance could not be obtained in Bristol, then the south Wales ports were to make up the shortfall. The ships and

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[65] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* 1306, 332

[66] PRO: DL29/573/9063

[67] *Cal. Pat. Roll.* 1316, 574-5

supplies were assembled in Haverford for the feast of purification, prior to departure for Ireland.

In 1324 and 1326 decrees were issued, as a result of a dispute with France which ordered larger ships from around the country to come to the kings service and which restricted the activities of smaller vessels.[68] On 10 May 1324, the mayors and bailiffs were ordered to assemble vessels capable of carrying forty *tunnes* of wine to be put on three days notice to set out in the kings service.[69] Swansea is not actually named in the list of ports but 'Goer' (*sic*) is listed along with Usk, Haverford, Pembroke and Carmarthen.[70] Two years later, in 1326, all ships that could carry less than fifty *tunnes* were ordered to remain in their ports, whereas those who were capable of carrying fifty *tunnes* or more were to depart to Portsmouth on the kings service.[71] Swansea is the only Welsh port town listed in this source, ships remaining within the ports were not permitted to leave for, 'fishing, trading or any other cause', until the bailiffs were told otherwise.[72] A list of ports from a 1377 account from Haverford details instructions from the king to protect the coast. Writs were sent to: Haverford, Cardigan, Newport (Pembs.), St. David's, Pembroke, Carmarthen, Kidwelly, Newport, Swansea, Usk and Chepstow.[73] Notable omissions from this list include Cardiff and Loughor.

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[68] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1324, 182 - 3, 1326, 640 - 1

[69] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1324, 183

[70] *Ibid.*, 183

[71] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1326, 641

[72] *Ibid.*, 641

[73] PRO: SC6/1221/5

5.8 Conclusion - Which Rivers were Being Used in the Middle Ages?

This chapter has reviewed the evidence for river and coastal transport in south Wales between 1100 and 1400. It has considered both archaeological evidence and historical sources. The use of rivers for transport in south Wales during the Middle Ages was not as extensive as in England. Documentary references tend to be limited and the opportunities for river transport was also limited. Much remains to be learned regarding the types of vessel being used on Welsh rivers, and unfortunately archaeological discoveries like the Magor Pill boat are rare. Coracles were widely used, but their effectiveness for transporting bulky goods and people was limited. If rivers that could accommodate coracles were taken into account, a much more dramatic picture of river navigation in medieval south Wales could be painted. As it is, this is not the case and a outline of the rivers of south Wales, and those that were navigable in the study period, are shown in Map 5.1.

Coastal shipping across the Bristol channel was of greater importance, notably in provisioning castles. Clinker built vessels, like the Magor Pill boat and the Alexandra dock boat find, were capable of fulfilling the role of cross channel passage as well as navigating the Wye and Usk rivers. Coastal transport also took place along the Bristol channel and up the Severn estuary as J.R.L. Allen has persuasively argued, using iron ore as an example.[74] This reflects a continuing tradition of moving goods up the Severn that is first known from the Roman period when Old Red Sandstone, quarried in Somerset, is found in a multitude of Roman settlements along the Severn estuary.[75]

This leaves the main issue at hand, to determine which of the rivers that have been identified as being navigable were actually being used in the period 1100 to

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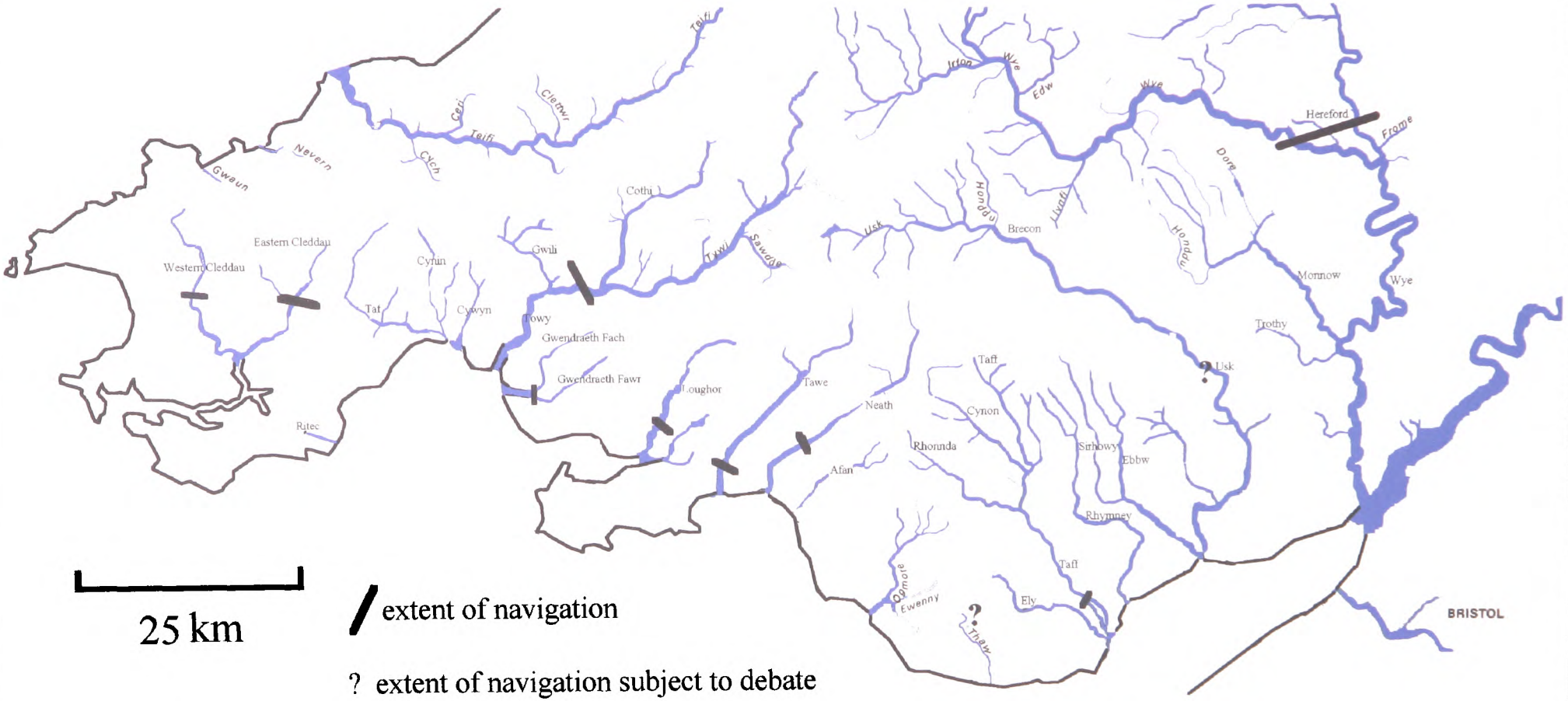
[74] Allen, J.R.L. (1996), 230

[75] Ruth Saunders at the 1998 Severn Estuary Levels Research Committee conference at the Caerleon Campus, UWCN



Map 5.1: The Rivers of south Wales

Map adapted from Usk River Authority supplementary information map on water quality

1400. Obviously, when dealing with such a broad time-span, there will have been periods when a particular stretch of river was subject to frequent use, and other times when it would have been rarely used. Nonetheless, the limitations in terms of surviving data, outlined more fully in the introductory chapter, mean that such a detailed analysis is not possible. Instead, an approach adopted in chapters two and three of this thesis has been to examine settlement size as a measure of prosperity. This approach is both simple and effective. By looking at the location of prominent trading centres in relation to a river that was navigable, it is possible to infer that the river was being reached by boats carrying cargo to trade.

There are documented instances of some rivers being used, notably in the case of the Wye and the Usk, both discussed earlier in this chapter. However, for many stretches of river there is no such surviving documentation and therefore their use in the Middle Ages has to be inferred. Therefore, it is proposed that the Taff, the Neath, the Tawe, the Loughor, the Taf, the Gwendraeth, the Towy, the Teifi, the Pembroke, the Ritec, the Thawe, the Monnow, the Western Cleddau and the Eastern Cleddau were all used by boats bringing importing and exporting cargo to trade between 1100 and 1400.

Map 5.1 shows each of the south Wales rivers and identifies which were navigable for boats in the Middle Ages. The coastal location of many market settlements was due to a variety of factors, among them the local topography and the nature of the Conquest itself. In the early stages it was far safer to provision castles by sea. Once this initial impetus has gone, the emphasis was on consolidation and economic exploitation of the available resources. Some settlements thrived, but others failed. It was usually the settlements that were inland and away from a main road or navigable river that failed to grow. Water-borne transport was cheaper than road transport and offered greater horizons as greater distances could be covered more quickly. This was an important consideration for foreign traders, who would have

been reluctant to penetrate too far inland due to the unstable political situation and the threat of attack from the Welsh. In answer to Beresford's fifth question then, the difficulties were not so much in navigation along the coast, but rather in the ability or lack of it to penetrate far inland by boat.

Chapter Six

The Monastic Influence on Transport and Trade

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine the influence of the monastic orders on the development of transport and trade between 1100 and 1400. It begins by tracing the history of the various orders in south Wales, and examining the distribution of monastic houses, the extent of landholding, economic activities and the accumulation of wealth. Commencing with the oldest established order, the Benedictines, this chapter will also consider the influence of the Cistercians, the Augustinians, the Dominicans and the Franciscans. Beresford's third question relates to how far ordinary people would travel to market. He had already assumed that there were difficulties in inland transport and proposed that this limited how far people would travel. The monastic authorities were amongst the most prominent 'players' in the south Wales economy and an appreciation of how this section of society functioned will help answer these questions.

The late eleventh and twelfth centuries had witnessed a gradual decline in the influence of the monastic orders, not just in Britain but across Europe.[1] The Benedictines in particular had seen their numbers dwindle, as religious life was viewed as having lost its spiritual base of simplicity and purity. Some quarters had openly expressed their wish for a return to traditional values. Among them was Abbot Robert, who relocated the Benedictine abbey of Molesme by establishing a new monastery at Citeaux in 1098. Robert was soon called back to Molesme, but those who remained sowed the seeds for the development of the Cistercian order. Adopting a strict interpretation of the rule of St. Benedict, later abbots, notably Bernard of

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[1] Williams, D.H. (2001) *The Welsh Cistercians* (Leominster, Gracewing) 1, is the most authoritative work on the Cistercians in Wales, it discusses the European context

Clairvaux and the English monk Stephen Harding, expanded the influence of this new order throughout Europe. With a philosophy of isolationism and an expressed desire to be 'far from the concourse of men,' the Cistercian approach was viewed by some as being at odds with traditional Christian spirituality (an approach which demanded direct contact with the secular world). Subsequently, other new orders were established, notably the two orders of friars who adhered to the teachings of St. Francis and St. Dominic: the Franciscans and the Dominicans.

It was these four religious orders who had the strongest presence in south Wales during the post-Conquest period. Prior to the conquest, the state of religious affairs is clouded by the lack of sources and by the jaded perceptions of later Anglo-Norman commentators. There was no single authority or unified structure. It was monastic in nature but could not be readily identified with the Benedictine-based monasticism that was prevalent throughout Europe.[2] The system of *clas* monasteries consisted of an abbot and a group of canons who were often married and held their position through inheritance rather than observance. Two of the most notable pre-Conquest ecclesiastical centres in south Wales were Llantwit Major and Llancarfan Fawr in Glamorgan.[3] Each locality had its own church and its territories were jealously guarded. Following the conquest this system was gradually absorbed into a network of conventual monastic houses, a network that would come to exert considerable influence on south Wales in the next few centuries.

6.2 The Benedictines

It was the Benedictines who first introduced Latin monasticism to the southern March, by settling in or near the new boroughs. Monastic land associated with the

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[2] Davies, R.R. (1987) *The Age of Conquest 1063-1415* (Oxford, University Press) 174

[3] Pritchard, T.J. (1984) "The Church in Medieval Senghenydd," *Journal of Welsh Ecclesiastical History* 1, 51

pre-Conquest Celtic monasteries of Llantwit and Llancarfan had been granted to the Benedictine abbeys of Tewkesbury and Gloucester, prior to the establishment of Margam and other, later, Cistercian abbeys.[4] The majority of Benedictine abbeys and priories were founded between 1070 and 1120, Usk priory appears to have been an exception, established in the period *c.*1170-76, perhaps at the same time as the town itself. It was in the lordship of Chepstow that the first wave of Benedictine colonists arrived, from Cormeilles in Normandy, in 1070. William fitz Osbern had previously founded a monastery at Cormeilles in 1060, and established Chepstow priory as a dependent cell of Cormeilles in his new lordship.

Chepstow soon gained the status of a conventual priory and was the first of sixteen Benedictine houses that would be established in south Wales. Occupying prominent urban locations, their influence proved extensive. Not all of these houses developed to the extent of becoming full conventual priories, many simply remained as dependent chapels. The church and priory of St. Mary in Cardiff was established in 1107 and quickly became established as the main church in Cardiff throughout the Middle Ages, in spite of the later establishments by other orders.[5]

The Benedictines ran their estates like manors, though their south Wales estates never seem to have been very extensive. This approach does not seem to have been too successful, particularly when compared to the success achieved by the Cistercians with their system of granges. The marked difference between the two was that Benedictine income was usually from rents and the tithes of appropriated churches, not from the manufacture of goods, growing of crops or rearing of livestock. That is not to say that they did not engage in such activities, moreover their urban presence allowed greater diversity in economic activity rather than simply

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[4] Cowley, F.G. (1967) "The Cistercian Economy in Glamorgan," *Morgannwg* 11,7

[5] The Benedictine abbey of Tewkesbury was also granted the chapel of St. Nicholas within the castle.

relying on their own produce. Cowley has identified the size of Benedictine estates as follows: Monmouth 480 acres, Abergavenny 420 acres, Chepstow 201 acres of arable, 28½ acres of meadow, with 82 acres of waste and pasture.[6]

One example of a Benedictine priory that stands out is Goldcliff. Goldcliff was quite exceptional amongst the Welsh Benedictine establishments as it had 1,221 acres of arable, along with 125 acres of meadow on its south Wales estates alone. It also held land in Somerset. By 1295 Goldcliff had become the largest and richest Benedictine priory in Wales valued at £175 16s 4.[7] Conventual Benedictine priories were expected to have at least twelve monks in order to function properly. Goldcliff exceeded this in 1295 boasting a cohort of twenty five monks. This situation did not last long. The following year five were removed, and a further five left a year later, leaving fifteen monks at the end of 1297.[8] On its estates in 1291 Goldcliff had one hundred and twenty sheep, sixty four cows, and four mares. It operated eight mills, compared with three belonging to Monmouth priory, and just two in Abergavenny.[9] It is not possible to determine the value of Goldcliff in 1291 based on the information given in the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*,[10] although its value in 1295 suggests that it was the most prosperous of the Benedictine holdings in south Wales. Still it lagged behind the major Cistercian abbeys of Margam, Neath and Tintern, who all recorded substantially higher values.

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[6] Cowley, F.G. (1977) *The Monastic Order in South Wales 1066-1349* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press), 57

[7] PRO: E/106/4/14; Cowley, F.G. (1977), 96

[8] Cowley, F.G. (1977) 57-58

[9] Ayscough, S. & Caley, J (eds.) (1802) *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae auctoritate Papae Nicholai IV* (hereafter *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*) (London, Record Commission) 281-3

[10] For a discussion see, Williams, D.H. (1978) "Goldcliff Priory" *Mon. Ant.*, 3, 37-54

Table 6.1 features a list of the total values of prominent Benedictine houses that were mentioned in the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* in 1291:

Location	Total Value in 1291
Brecon	£122 10s. 0d.
Monmouth	£85 18s. 8d.
Ewenni	£56 3s. 0d.
Abergavenny	£51 17s. 10½ d.
Usk	£42 6s. 0d.
Chepstow	£35 19s. 11d.
Cardiff	£20 10s. 0d.
Pembroke	£19 6s. 3½d.
Kidwelly	£16 1s. 8d.
Cardigan	£16 0s. 0d.
St. Clears	£15 19s. 2d.

Table 6.1: The values of prominent Benedictine abbeys and priories in South Wales in 1291 from the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*,[11] see also Cowley (1977) [12]

Brecon priory was certainly one of the most valuable of the Benedictine houses, being valued at £122 10*s.* in 1291. The previous year a dispute had arisen between the Prior of Brecon and the keeper of the king's castle at Builth, John Giffard, over incomes from the town of Builth. The prior complained to the king that tithes from Builth belonged to the church of Brecon and that prises of ale and tolls extracted from tenants and men coming to the 'land and town of Builth to trade' were his, rather than belonging to the king as Giffard maintained.[13] It is undoubtedly from such ventures that Brecon Priory became relatively prosperous in the late thirteenth century. Caution must be exercised, however, because some abbeys and priories were assessed lightly, due to the negative effects of attacks by the Welsh that some of the houses experienced. The poorest Benedictine house in 1291 was St. Clears which was

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[11] *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*, 282-5

[12] *Ibid.*, 274

[13] *Cal. Pat. Roll.* 1290, 402

valued at £15 9*s*. 2*d*., less than the troubled Cistercian abbey of Grace Dieu which recorded a value of just £18 5*s*. 8*d*.

The fortunes of the Benedictine order declined during the later thirteenth century and throughout the fourteenth century. In 1319 it is recorded that Abergavenny had only five monks, whilst Chepstow by 1370 had been reduced to just four; significantly less than the optimum number for the running of a priory. From 1264 Monmouth priory had been experiencing financial difficulties,[14] and by 1315 it was increasingly impossible to maintain the convent of monks there.[15] Goldcliff, the richest Benedictine priory in Wales, did not consider itself so affluent at the time, especially when compared to its more affluent English cousins. The monks of Goldcliff themselves had complained of their poverty in 1290. In 1290 Edward I granted a fair to Goldcliff from the Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul (29 June) for eight days, sealing the grant himself, commenting that, 'they are poor and not sufficient for making fine.'[16]

6.3 The Cistercians

The most significant presence of any of the monastic orders in the March of south Wales was that of the Cistercians. As the eminent Cistercian scholar, the Rev. Dr. D.H. Williams, has recently noted, '(they) played a crucial role in the development of Welsh culture and history as centres of relative security, learning and literature, of charity and hospitality, and of spiritual and temporal prestige.'[17] By far, their most prominent legacy, was within the fields of economic endeavour. Tintern

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[14] Graham, R. (1929-30) "Four Alien Priories in Monmouthshire," *J. Brit. Arch. Ass'n.* 35, 108

[15] Cowley, F.G. (1977), 230

[16] *Cal. Chart. Roll.* III, 123

[17] Williams, D.H. (2001), 341

was the first abbey established in Wales, built in 1131 three years after the Cistercian order arrived in Britain, on land granted by the lord of Striguil.[18]

The Cistercians were especially short of money in the early years of their history. They were to find a remedy in the rearing of cattle, horses and sheep. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Welsh princes had often appeased the English kings with large tributes of cattle and horses. Whilst sheep rearing had been a long established tradition, what marked the Cistercians out was the scale and intensity of their farming methods. The initial impetus towards maintaining larger flocks appears to have been provided by the Flemings, who were brought into west Wales shortly after 1100 by Henry I.[19] Gerald of Wales has commented on the industry of the Flemings and their contacts in the Low Countries - where wool was fetching high prices - which provided opportunities for export.[20] The Cistercians, too, had links in mainland Europe and saw the opportunities offered by the European wool market. It was in the later twelfth century that the Welsh Cistercians began to devote their attention to large scale sheep farming. The system of grange estates was developed as a network covering huge tracts of land, the self-contained nature of which made them far more efficient than the traditional manorial estates. Due to the abundance of wool it is likely that hides and grain were viewed as more of a high order item in south Wales compared to the regions of England where grain was plentiful. So given over to wool production were the Cistercian abbeys that, in 1234, the abbot of Neath obtained a royal licence to buy corn in England to meet the needs of his household.[21] Abbeys were often exempt from tolls on goods entering and leaving towns which made transport costs more efficient. Margam, Neath and Tintern, to name but three were

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[18] Knowles, D. (1951) *The Monastic Order in England* (Cambridge, University Press), 208-26

[19] Kissock, J.A. (1997) 123

[20] Brewer, J.S., Dimock, J.F. and Warner, G.F. (eds.) *Gerald of Wales, Opera* (London, Rolls Series)

[21] *Cal. Pat. Roll.* 1232-47, 69

subject to such exemptions. The monks themselves were a hardworking, unpaid labour force who could adapt to all aspects of the preparation and sale of wool, although the demand for wool and the numbers of people entering into monastic life meant that lay-brothers and hired labourers were also frequently used.

The Savignac abbey of Neath was founded before Tintern, in 1130 and the Cistercian abbey of Margam was founded in 1147, the same year that the Savignacs merged with the Cistercians, resulting in Neath becoming a sister abbey to Margam. In south east Wales the Cistercian abbey of Grace Dieu was a relatively late foundation, being established in 1226. The abbey was re-sited in 1233 after being burnt by the Welsh, who claimed that it had been sited on land wrongly taken from them.[22] Its history remained troubled, In 1276 plans were made to re-locate Grace Dieu once again. It is not known if they were ever carried out. In 1280 the abbot of Tintern was commissioned to enquire as to the cause of the ruin of Grace Dieu.[23] Meanwhile, Llantarnam was founded by a colony sent from Strata Florida *c.* 1197. It was never one of the richer abbeys and in 1317 the abbot of Llantarnam wrote: 'our abbey is so poor that it cannot sustain barely twenty monks'.[24] Whitland Abbey which was established in west Wales in 1151 fared better. One of the few useful sources for the period, the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*, provides the assessed value of Cistercian abbeys in 1291 (Table 6.2):

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[22] Donkin, R.A. (1959) "The Site Changes of Medieval Cistercian Monasteries", *Geography* 44, 255; see also Williams, D.H. (1990) *Atlas of Cistercian Lands in Wales* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press) 19

[23] Cowley, F.G. (1977), 230

[24] Williams, D.H. (1965) "The Cistercians in Wales: Some Aspects of their Economy," *Arch. Camb.* 114, 30

Location	Total Value in 1291
Margam	£255 17s. 4½d.
Neath	£236 1s. 5d.
Tintern	£145 3s. 0d.
Llantarnam	£44 15s. 0d.
Whitland	£43 15s. 4d.
Grace Dieu	£18 5s. 8d.

Table 6.2: The value of Cistercian abbeys in 1291, figures derived from *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* and D.H. Williams (2001)[25]

Table 6.2 reveals that Margam was by far the richest Cistercian abbey in south Wales in 1291. Neath is valued at almost £100 less, yet it is still significantly more prosperous than Tintern which is in third and Llantarnam, Whitland and Grace Dieu follow. Mention has been made of the troubles experienced at Grace Dieu with the rebellious Welsh, and the comparatively low figure for Whitland could suggest that it too had been assessed lightly due to the deleterious effects of Welsh insurrection.

Despite their expressed desire for seclusion, it was in the best interests of the Cistercians to at least have some influence on the activities that took place in towns (see below). This would help to facilitate trade and procure markets for wool and other produce from their estates. It would also provide access to much needed supplies that the order could not produce themselves. Holding property in towns could provide temporary lodging and could also be leased out, thus providing an additional source of income; a source of revenue that assumed greater importance in the fourteenth century. In England, Donkin has identified that urban property held by the Cistercians consisted of five groups: burgages, hospices, warehouses, cellars and wharves.[26] In south Wales there are recorded examples of some of these, with suggestions that there were others too. In 1276 Margam was granted a burgage in St.

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[25] *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*, 281-4; see also Williams, D.H. (2001) 166-70

[26] Donkin, R.A. (1978) *The Cistercians: Studies in the Geography of Medieval England and Wales* (Toronto, PIMST) 196

Mary Street, Cardiff, by Matildis, the widow of Hugh de Kaerdif.[27] This grant represented one of at least three tenements that the abbey acquired in Cardiff that year.[28] Margam additionally held an unspecified number of burgages in Kenfig at this time.[29] The abbey also benefited from income from the newly appropriated churches of Penthlyn, Avan and Llangenneth.[30] Surviving extents record that in 1305 the Benedictine priory of St. Clears was receiving 32*s.* per year within the town of St. Clears. On the basis that burgage rents were 1*s.* annually it can be inferred that the priory of St. Clears had a major presence within the town, for, whilst the size and relative status of St. Clears in the Middle Ages is not known, this figure would represent a substantial interest in any of its neighbouring settlements.[31] In archaeological terms, the ongoing programme of geophysical survey at Trelech has hinted at a previously unknown monastic hospice within the town.[32] There are no surviving records of a hospice there, but that does not preclude there from being one.

It was in large scale sheep farming that the Cistercians excelled. Large grange estates allowed flocks to be isolated and the spread of disease restricted, so allowing the sheep population to flourish. In 1291 there were in excess of 20,000 sheep on their estates in Wales.[33] This is quite considerable even after the sheep scab epidemic of the 1280s. Cowley has postulated that there may have been twice as many sheep on Cistercian estates prior to the outbreak of the epidemic.[34] The monks, or more usually

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[27] *Clark Cartae* no. 726, 792 dated 12 Jan 1276

[28] *Clark Cartae* no. 723; no. 729, 795

[29] *Clark Cartae* no. 710,778

[30] *Clark Cartae* no. 1077, 1428

[31] PRO: E105/4/19; for the status of St. Clears see Soulsby (1983)

[32] Hamilton, M. & Howell, R. (2000) "Trelech: Geophysical Survey of a Presumed Hospice Site", *Med. Arch.* 44, 229-33

[33] *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*, 282-5

[34] Cowley (1977), 87

their lay brothers, reared, prepared, graded and packed wool. It was in the preparation of wool that the Cistercians were noted, a process which ensured its quality. In turn this meant that wool from Cistercian estates commanded high prices on the European market. The monks were, as Donkin puts it, 'pre-eminent in the preparation of wool for sale.'[35] Surviving records indicate that there were fulling mills at Grace Dieu,[36] Margam,[37] and Tintern,[38] although unfortunately little evidence survives prior to the fifteenth century which details their use. There were tanneries at Margam and Tintern, but there is also evidence of other activities as the monks of Tintern sold honey, whilst Neath operated fisheries with seven weirs.[39] By the 1250s, wool was being regularly exported to Flanders from the estates of Margam abbey, with 41 sacks of wool sold to the merchants of Ghent.[40] The following year it was anticipated that part of the clip would be sold to London merchants, which reflects the fact that they abbey was not solely dependent on one market for export.

Although the Cistercians were primarily noted as sheep farmers, it is interesting to see in Table 6.3 that cattle featured prominently at Grace Dieu and the relatively high numbers of cattle, given their value in relation to sheep at other abbeys. Whilst there is no figure for cattle on the estates of Llantarnam obtainable from the *Taxatio*, it does reveal that Llantarnam's total livestock value in 1291 was £26 6*s*. 6*d*.[41] The pattern of landholding on which these animals were held is also

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[35] Donkin, R.A. (1958) "Cistercian Sheep Farming and Wool Sales during the Thirteenth Century", *Agri. Hist. Rev.* 6, 2 - 8

[36] *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*, 172

[37] *Ibid.*, 274; mentioned again in 1336 see *Clark Cartae* 4, 153-4

[38] Caley, J., Ellis, H & Bignall, B. (eds.) (1830) *Dugdale's Monasticon Anglicanum* (London, Records Commission) 5, 651

[39] *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*, 282

[40] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1250, 304,314

[41] *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*, 284-5; see also Donkin, R.A. (1962a) "Cattle on the Estates of Medieval Cistercian Monasteries in England and Wales", *Ec. Hist. Rev.* 15, 43

interesting; by the end of the period Llantarnam had thirteen granges whilst Tintern had just eight. Tintern's granges were, however, larger than Llantarnam's, which suggests more intensive production on the estates of Tintern; particularly when borne in mind the high regard Tintern's wool was held in on the European market.

Location	Number of Sheep	Estimated value of sheep*	Number of Cattle
Margam	5285	£139 6s 8d	425
Tintern	3264	£86 13s. 4d.	100
Whitland	1100	£29 6s. 8d.	88
Neath	693	£13 13s 4d	20
Llantarnam	588	£10 6s.	N/A
Grace Dieu	22	12s. 6d.	11

Table 6.3: Number of sheep (with estimated value) in relation to cattle on the estates of Cistercian abbeys in 1291 (figures from *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*)[42]

The list of the Italian wool merchant Francesco Balducci Pergolotti reveals that Llantarnam exported just eight sacks of wool a year, compared to Margam with 25 sacks of medium quality wool, Tintern with 15 sacks of high quality wool, and Whitland's 15 sacks of medium quality wool. The full list is provided in Table 6.4. Tintern's wool fetched a much higher price on the European wool market, at twenty eight marks, than any other British abbey as a result of its quality in the thirteenth century.[43]

Throughout the twelfth and for most of the thirteenth century the Cistercians generally organised and worked their estates themselves. Leasing gradually became

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[42] *Taxatio Ecclesiastica*, 281-5

[43] Williams (2001), 258-9

Location	Number of sacks	Quality
Margam	25	medium
Tintern	15	high
Whitland	15	medium
Neath	10	medium
Llantarnam	8	medium
Grace Dieu	5	medium

Table 6.4: Number of sacks of wool traded on the European market annually from Pergolotti's list.[44]

more common towards the close of the thirteenth century, as the numbers of *conversi* (lay brothers) diminished.[45] Despite their numbers dwindling the Cistercians still fared better in the latter part of the thirteenth century than the Benedictines; as there is evidence of expansion at both Neath abbey and also at Tintern.[46] By 1400 the Cistercians were in the process of moving away from their direct involvement in estate management and agricultural endeavour. Gradually the Cistercian economy of the fourteenth century became more dependant on leasing out lands for rent and trading in other goods. The break up of well managed estates was evident in Glamorgan as the emphasis of the Cistercians shifted towards incomes from rents as land and properties were leased more widely.[47] At Llantarnam, archaeological evidence has not revealed a sudden change in the activities taking place near the abbey as a result of this change of emphasis.[48] But a gradual shift from focusing on a specific activity towards diversification into different activities was taking place. So

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[44] Cowley (1977), 89

[45] Donkin, R.A. (1960) "Settlement and Depopulation on Cistercian Estates During the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, especially in Yorkshire," *Bull. Inst. Hist. Res.* 33,141

[46] For Neath abbey see Butler, L.A.S. (1976) *Neath Abbey* London: HMSO; for Tintern: Courtney, P. (1989) "Excavations in the Outer Precinct of Tintern Abbey," *Med. Arch.* 33 99-143

[47] Cowley, F.G. (1967) "The Cistercian Economy in Glamorgan," *Morgannwg* 11, 26

[48] Mein, A.G. (1981/2) "A Deserted Village and Other Remains: Llantarnam Abbey, near Cwmbran, Gwent," *GGAT Annual Report*, 47-52

much so that the granges of Neath and Margam in Glamorgan gradually became indistinguishable from secular manors as the fourteenth century progressed.

6.4 The Augustinians

The first Augustinian foundation in south Wales appeared in Haverfordwest sometime before 1200.[49] It is suspected as being earlier than Llanthony Prima in the Black Mountains, which Robinson tentatively dates to *c.*1118.[50] Overall, the Augustinian impact on the landscape and on the national consciousness was not as great as that of the Benedictines, and certainly not the Cistercians. Nonetheless, some of their priories do appear to have become quite profitable as revealed in the few sources that do survive. Unlike the Benedictines, the Augustinians recruited locally and developed a network of dependant chapels. The Augustinian foundation at Carmarthen stood at the head of a group of seven dependant chapels.[51]

Location	Value in 1291
Llanthony Prima	£233 7s. 0d.
Talley	£62 3s. 4d.
Carmarthen	£29 16s. 2d.
Haverford	£17 6s. 8d.
St. Kynemark	£11 7s. 4d.

Table 6.5: Value of Augustinian holdings in south Wales in 1291, after Cowley (1977), 275

Despite being heavily in debt Llanthony Prima was still receiving grants of land in the late thirteenth century.[52] Its valuation in the *Taxatio* (Table 6.5) indicates that despite its problems with debt, the money that had been borrowed had been used

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[49] Robinson, D.M. (1980a), *The Geography of Augustinian Settlement in Medieval England and Wales*, BAR British Series 80, 21, 29

[50] *Ibid.*, 46

[51] *Ibid.*, 249

[52] *Cal. Pat. Roll.* 1281-92, 477

for investment and those investments could yield a considerable return. The holdings of the Augustinians in south Wales tended to be unevenly distributed and there is very little record of Augustinian activity in south Wales during the thirteenth century. Carmarthen priory appears to have fared more positively during the fourteenth century, by 1400 its annual income may have exceeded £200.[53]

St. Kynemark's near Chepstow was the last and also the smallest of the Augustinian foundations in Wales. Originating sometime between 1245 and 1271, little is known of its history, and the same can be said for the Augustinian order as a whole in south Wales during the Middle Ages.

6.5 The Franciscans and Dominicans

The Dominican order arrived in Britain in 1221, followed in 1224 by the Franciscans. Both set about establishing a network of houses across the country. Principally they tended to occupy the more prominent and prosperous urban centres. Four Dominican and three Franciscan friaries were established in Wales during the thirteenth century (three and two respectively in south Wales), only Cardiff possessed houses of both orders.[54] This reflects Cardiff's status at the head of its lordship and as a major trading centre. Overall, these houses remained comparatively rare in the thirteenth century, remaining in places where it was expected that any surplus wealth could be used to support the order. Prosperous large centres, like Cardiff, offered the order access to individuals free from the confines of lordship who could make a financial contribution as well as become members of the order.

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[53] Cowley, F.G. (1977), 95

[54] The Dominican friary was located outside the west gate of Cardiff. Whilst the Franciscans were to the North of Crokkerton.

The main Franciscan friaries at both Cardiff and Carmarthen were established sometime before 1284. Of the three main Dominican houses, Cardiff was founded pre-1242, Haverford pre-1246, and Brecon pre-1269. What little evidence there is of these two orders tends to suggest that they flourished for a time in the thirteenth century, perhaps rivalling the Cistercians in terms of the population of monks. There were eighteen Franciscan monks in Cardiff in 1284 and thirty Dominicans in 1295. In terms of their influence on transport and trade, no further evidence is known.[55]

6.6 Other Orders

The south Wales holdings of the crusading orders of the Knights Templar and Hospitaller were never extensive.[56] Originally established to protect pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem, the Templars' holdings were merged with those of the Hospitallers in the early fourteenth century following the disbanding of the order in October 1307. Details of Templar and Hospitaller holdings in south Wales have been provided by Rees and Larking.[57] These accounts reveal that for the most part Templar/Hospitaller holdings in the southern March appear to have consisted of several small manors spread unevenly between Monmouthshire and Pembrokeshire. These smaller manors, like Kemeys in Monmouthshire and Templeton in Pembrokeshire, were usually leased to a local landowner to provide income and not worked by the order themselves.

6.7 The '*grangia*'

The concept of the grange is commonly associated with the Cistercians. However, it was also adopted by the Augustinians and to a lesser extent by the

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[55] Williams, G. (1962) *The Welsh Church from Conquest to Reformation* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press) 26-7, 82-4

[56] Lord, E. (2002) *The Knights Templar in Britain* (London, Longman) 114

[57] Larking L.B. (ed.) 1857, *The Knights Hospitaller in England,* Camden Society 65, London: Camden Society; Rees, W. 1947, *A History of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in Wales and on the Welsh Border including an Account of the Templars* Cardiff: Western Mail & Echo

Benedictines. The exact meaning of the term *grangia* appears to have been loosely defined, its literal meaning was 'granary', however, it also came to mean 'barn' and also 'farm'.[58] Today the word 'grange' symbolises a self contained monastic estate containing a farmstead set within defined boundaries such as hedges, ditches or walls that also possessed facilities for keeping livestock, and storing goods and produce.[59] Monastic granges were also free of many of the obligations of the outside world, were free of tithe payments and were worked by the monks themselves or their *conversi.*

Some granges were given over to concentrating on the production of specific goods. In Yorkshire, specialisation took place at specific granges in the production of salt, others concentrated on iron mining, whilst fishing was also a prime concern of the coastal granges.[60] In south Wales, coal was mined from Margam's grange at Resolven.[61] Neath's lowland granges like Monknash and the 800 acre estate at Gelli-garn were geared towards sheep rearing.[62] The size of grange estates varied considerably; there were 210 acres at Llantarnam's upland grange at Cillonydd,[63] compared with over 600 acres, at Neath's lowland grange at Monknash, in the Vale of Glamorgan.[64] There has been some disagreement over the size of the grange estate at Monknash. David Robinson has used the amount of tithe-free land to determine its size and has concluded that it was 600 acres. The Royal Commission, using

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[58] Donnelly, J.S. (1954) "Changes in the Grange Economy of English and Welsh Cistercian Abbeys, 1300 - 1540", *Traditio* 10,405

[59] Platt, C. (1969) *The Monastic Grange in Medieval England: A Reassessment*, (London, Macmillan) remains the seminal study

[60] Courtney, P. (1980) "The Monastic Granges of Leicestershire," *Transactions of the Leicester Archaeological and Historical Society* 56, 33

[61] Gray, T. (1903) "Notes on the Granges of Margam Abbey," *J. Brit. Arch. Ass'n.* 9, 172

[62] Williams, D.H. (2001), 199

[63] Weeks, R. (1998d) "Cillonydd Grange Landscape Study", *Med. Set. Res. Group Annual Report*, 13, 48 - 49

[64] Robinson, D.M. (1981/2) "The Monastic Grange in South East Wales" *GGAT Annual report*, 47

boundaries from early OS maps, have argued for 820 acres being worked by the grange in addition to the land that was 'tithe free'.[65] A 1.6km boundary bank marks the north western limit of the estate on post-medieval plans, and other similar boundaries enclose a larger area than the amount of land given as tithe-free.[66] The estate at Monknash may have been enlarged after 1215, when tithe exemptions on newly acquired lands were abolished. As noted, some abbeys, like Tintern, appear to have operated fewer, larger granges and farmed them more intensively. Cistercian lands had the benefit of being exempt from the payment of tithes from 1132 until 1215, when the Fourth Lateran Council abolished the privilege for new foundations. Tithe exemptions of lands held by the Cistercians from before this time survived beyond the dissolution of the monasteries and passed to subsequent tenants and owners. Thus, the exact boundaries of many monastic estates can be identified by examining nineteenth century tithe maps and apportionments which reveal areas regarded as being historically tithe 'free.' This method was employed in order to identify the size of the estates at both Cillonydd and Monknash. In south Wales the Cistercians acquired great swathes of land before 1215, which makes the tithe-free method of delimiting Cistercian landscapes particularly useful. There remains tremendous scope for the study of monastic estates using this method, with only a handful of studies having been carried out in south Wales.

There were fifty four monastic granges in Glamorgan, but not all of them belonged to Welsh-based abbeys.[67] Bristol abbey held two granges, whilst Tewkesbury abbey had direct interest in three. Gloucester abbey, Keynsham abbey

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[65] *Ibid.*; RCAHMW (1982) *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Glamorgan, Vol. 3 part 2: Medieval Non-Defensive Secular Monuments*, (Cardiff, HMSO), 262

[66] Glamorgan Record Office (GRO): D/D Xnm 3; West Glamorgan area Record Office (WGaRO): D/D D E/157, 158

[67] RCAHMW (1982) *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Glamorgan, Vol. 3 part 2: Medieval Non-Defensive Secular Monuments*, (Cardiff, HMSO) 246

and the Knights Templar all held one apiece.[68] Margam abbey stood at the head of a network of twenty eight granges, more than any other Welsh Cistercian abbey. Neath possessed the next largest network with seventeen granges, whilst there were thirteen granges belonging to Llantarnam and eight each adhering to Tintern and Grace Dieu.

One of the few comparatively well investigated - in both archaeological and historical terms - grange sites is Tintern's Merthyrgeryn grange in Magor. This estate is the only south Wales example of a grange where detailed accounts survive, unfortunately they only detail the years 1387-89. At Merthyrgeryn over one hundred wage earning labourers, *mercenaries*, were being employed during these years, engaged in a diverse economy of rearing sheep, pigs, cattle and poultry as well as growing corn.[69] In addition to payment, which averaged 2*d.* for ploughing, 2*d.* for harvesting and 4*d.* per day for hay making, the workers were also fed, 'lest they go from the field to their own.'[70] Some surpluses were being produced for sale, but primarily produce was being consumed by the abbey. Land was being leased out and rent received from it, despite this overall profit margins were low.

6.8 The Accumulation of Wealth

Aside from the core activities of the monastic houses, some benefited from other sources of income, usually grants of land and tenements. These grants could come from private individuals, the local lord, or the Crown, although in the case of both the Augustinians and the Cistercians it has been demonstrated that these 'grants' of properties and rights were often actually 'purchases' by the order concerned.[71] The largest of the Cistercian abbeys, Margam and Neath seem to have been particularly

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[68] *Ibid.*, 246

[69] Parkes, L.N. & Webster, P,V. (1974) "Merthyrgeryn: A Grange of Tintern," *Arch. Camb.* 73, 140

[70] Williams, D.H. (2001), 246

[71] Robinson (1980a), 335

active in acquiring lands, so much so that a number of disputes emerged between the two during the thirteenth century.[72] In the late twelfth century Margam received almost fifty acres of land adjacent to the River Taff from Gunnilda, the wife of Roger Sturmi.[73] Lands such as these could then be rented out for profit or worked by monks from the abbey, their *conversi* or *mercenaries*. Among the tenants of Margam abbey were the Knights Hospitaller, who rented Margam land at Goylake in the 1280s.[74] Despite the increasing status of the Welsh foundations, English Abbeys such as Tewkesbury maintained an influence until at least 1400, as is demonstrated by an adjudication from the Bishop of Llandaff in July 1397, concerning the repair and future maintenance of Kenfig church by its vicars and by Tewkesbury Abbey.[75] This reflects the general shift in Cistercian activity away from their traditional base in uninhabited inhospitable areas, and perhaps a move away from their ideals of isolationism and hard work. Margam was also granted rights to free trading in Gower sometime prior to 1320 by William de Breos, lord of Gower.[76]

The prolific activity of Margam in the land market was equalled in the field of commodities. The abbey possessed considerable purchasing power, and among their regular orders was for a supply of cumin from one Robert de Kaerdif.[77] This move to dealing in forms of produce other than wool, and hides was assured when the abbey was granted freedom from tax on all food and goods.[78] The extent of its influence

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[72] Cowley, F.G. (1967) "Neath versus Margam: Some Thirteenth Century Disputes," *Transactions of the Port Talbot Historical Society* I 7-14

[73] *Clark Cartae* no. 142, 140

[74] *Clark Cartae* no. 741, 856

[75] *Clark Cartae* no. 741, 856

[76] *Clark Cartae* no. 848, 1081

[77] *Clark Cartae* no. 725, 791

[78] *Clark Cartae* no. 107

was quite considerable as it held lands in, and received profits from Kenfig, as well as land at Keynsham in Somerset as early as the twelfth century.[79] In the 1260s, a protracted dispute arose between Margam and Tewkesbury abbey over the tithes of St. Leonard's church, Newcastle with an agreement only finally being reached in 1268 in favour of Tewkesbury.[80] In October 1394 agreement was reached that Margam was no longer liable to pay farm rent for the churches of Kenfig and Newcastle to Tewkesbury has had previously been the case.[81]

In 1289, Earl Gilbert the Red reached an agreement with the abbot of Neath Abbey, whereby the Earl acquired lands from the Abbey that had been originally granted to them by Richard de Granville. Under the terms of the agreement the lord was required to pay £100 a year to the Abbey. This reflects the value attached to those lands and the wealth that Neath Abbey could generate, especially when compared to Margam. The £100 was raised from a combination of burgage rents in the towns of Cardiff, Caerleon, Cowbridge, Llantwit and Neath and demesne rents from Llanblethian, and La Thawe. The respective sums drawn from each source are recorded below:

Town/Settlement	1295	1306/7	1314
Llanblethian	£23 6s 7½d	N/A	£23 5s 7½d
Llantwit	£22 18s 4½d	N/A	£25 17s
Cardiff	£20 3s -	N/A	£20 3s -
Cowbridge	£14 12s 7½d	N/A	£14 12s 7½d
Caerleon	£10 7s 4d	N/A	N/A
La Thawe	£7 17s 7d	N/A	N/A
Neath	- 114s 4½d	- 113s ¾d	- 109s 2d

Table 6.6: Income from rents of the Abbot of Neath
Sources: 1295 - Cal. IPM Vol. III no. 371[82]
1306/7 -Cal. IPM Vol. IV no. 435[83] and for 1314: - Cal. IPM Vol. V no. 538[84]

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[79] *Clark Cartae* no. 305, 307; no. 143, 141

[80] *Clark Cartae* no. 642, 696

[81] *Clark Cartae*, no. 1068, 1380

[82] *Cal. IPM* III no. 371

The decision to extract certain amounts from particular places may have been purely arbitrary but it does give some indication of the types of returns the lord was receiving from various sources in order to make the required payment. The smallest contribution comes from Neath, where Neath abbey itself was a major landlord. Interestingly Cowbridge and its hinterland of Llanblethian are recorded separately, with the latter contributing more from rents of its agriculturally rich lands than contributions from burgage rents within the town, it may have been the case that not all the rents from burgages in Cowbridge were directed in this fashion. The highest contributions are drawn from Llantwit, the only town to increase its contribution from 1295 to 1314. The role of this port and market town has hitherto been neglected in terms of a trading settlement in the context of a wider Glamorgan. This project is seeking, in part, to redress that deficiency.

Margam's position on a main highway meant that its bills for hospitality could be crippling. The rule of St. Benedict, which the Cistercian order in its early years strictly observed, required that guests should be received as if Christ himself was visiting. This created a lot of practical problems, especially when the guests could range from travelling merchants, to the poor and homeless, to the monarch and his entourage visiting *en-route* to Ireland. The expense of each had to be borne, and in the case of the latter, more familiar with being entertained by the more affluent English abbeys, the cost could be excessive. Thus, diversity in Cistercian economic activity may have been a necessity in order to carry on bearing such expenses. Such diversity would have been of greater importance when the numbers of monks in the order were reduced.

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[83] *Cal. IPM* IV no. 435

[84] *Cal. IPM* V no. 538

More generally there are few references to monastic markets and fairs in south Wales. Some examples are known: Goldcliff, which was discussed earlier and a reference from a 1205 charter of King John which granted the Bishops of Llandaff an annual fair from the Feast of Pentecost and a weekly market held on Sunday.[85] The bishopric of St. David's held markets and fairs in Pembrokeshire. Donkin discovered that half of all Cistercian houses developed markets and fairs but he found none in south Wales.[86] D.H. Williams has noted that annual fairs were held at Whitland, nevertheless there is no firm evidence to suggest that they were being held there in the Middle Ages.[87]

6.9 The Influence on Road Transport

Earlier in the thesis the notion was advanced that those with the resources to undertake a programme of road construction were the military, the monasteries and the Marcher lords. It was also suggested that the cost of such an exercise would, for the most part, be prohibitive. Therefore, in the cases of the monastic orders it would be expected that incidences of deliberate road construction would be rare. This appears to be supported by the evidence. D.H. Williams has for some time suspected that the 'Stony Way', a paved surface stretching for just over a mile linking Tintern Abbey with Trelech grange, is almost certainly of monastic, rather than Roman origin.[88] It may have acted as a status symbol, reflecting the wealth that Tintern accumulated in the thirteenth century, since deliberately constructed medieval roads outside of towns were rare. Conversely, earlier research by this author into the landscape at Llantarnam's grange of Cillonydd on the western slopes of Mynydd

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[85] *Clark Cartae*, no. 289, 293

[86] Donkin, R.A. (1962b) "The Markets and Fairs of Medieval Cistercian Monasteries in England and Wales," *Cisterciensерchronik*, 59/60, 7

[87] Williams, D.H. (2001), 262

[88] Williams, D.H. (1998) "Cistercian Roads and Routeways", *Tarmac Papers* 2, 244

Maen has suggested that the most substantial trackway that runs past the site may be of Roman, rather than medieval origin.[89] It clearly shows signs of deliberate construction and yet it does not run towards the monastic grange buildings. This track is undoubtedly the extension of the track named Hewlett -y- Fforest which runs past the parochial chapel site of Llanderfel on the eastern slopes of Mynydd Maen. Here, too, it appears that the monastic building was laid out alongside a pre-existing road.[90] Whatever the case, it is apparent that this route was used in the Middle Ages. A western pilgrimage route headed towards the shrine at Penrhys,[91] whilst to the east there was Llanderfel, with its alleged Arthurian relics and Caerleon, some miles to the east, may have provided an ultimate destination, with its impressive remains that were a legacy of the Roman occupation. A formalised road system may have come into existence as rights of way were negotiated with local landowners. Given that the Cistercians in particular were major landowners, a recognised system would soon have developed within their heartland, around their abbeys and priories and heading towards their granges and chapels.

6.10 The Influence on Sea and River Transport

The location of many of the major monastic houses near rivers or on the coastal lowlands points to a maritime flavour in day to day monastic life. Unfortunately surviving records of the same are limited. Sea going vessels are mentioned as being operated by Margam abbey in 1229[92] and again in 1234.[93] Neath is also recorded as operating vessels.[94] In terms of river navigation, Tintern was

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[89] Weeks, R. (1998d), 48

[90] Williams, D.H. (1990) *Atlas of Cistercian Lands in Wales* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press) , 140

[91] Gray, M. (1996) "Penrhys: The Archaeology of a Pilgrimage", *Morgannwg* 40, 10

[92] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1227-31, 203

[93] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1231-4, 360

[94] *Cal. Pat. Roll.* 1232-47, 69, 108

operating boats on the River Wye in 1268, but had an influence on boats using the Wye for at least ten years prior to that, as in 1258 wine was stored at 2*d.* a day for 7 days in transit to Monmouth castle.[95] The famine in 1189 brought crowds of poor people flocking to the doors of Margam abbey for relief. A ship was sent to fetch corn from Bristol to feed them.[96]

Provision for right of wreck was usually enjoyed by the secular lord, however Margam, Neath and Tintern were entitled to claim all goods from ships wrecked at sea or washed up on their land.[97] The fact that Neath was dealing with Florentine merchants,[98] and Tintern with merchants of Flanders[99] suggests that maritime transport was well established amongst the Welsh monasteries by the thirteenth century.

6.11 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to consider the presence of the monastic orders in south Wales during the study period and to consider their influence on the development of transport and trade between 1100 and 1400. The patchy nature of the source material means that only the briefest of glimpses are possible through sources like the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica.* The Religious orders were to play an important role in the Welsh medieval economy, notably the Cistercians with their strong work ethic and tradition of cultivating land in often inhospitable areas. Wool production was an important part of the Welsh medieval economy and was strongly associated with all the thirteen Cistercian Abbeys in Wales and their associated granges. It was the

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[95] *Cal. Inq. Misc.* 1227-1307 no. 354

[96] Cowley F.G. (1967), 17

[97] *Cal. Chart. Roll.* III, 104-5

[98] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1288-96, 447

[99] Illingworth W. (ed.) (1812) *Rotuli Hundredorum* (London, Records Commission) I, 276

grange system that effectively organised sheep rearing, that was especially suited to upland areas. Although this was not the sole activity of the grange system it was an important one.

Other monastic orders were also present; the Benedictines, the Augustinians and the Dominicans and Franciscans. The impact and activities of these orders is less well recorded than that of the Cistercians, yet it is possible to review the general themes that all of these orders were subject to between 1100 and 1400. Through the last quarter of the thirteenth century some of the monasteries of south Wales seem to have endured a series of crises, that were exacerbated by the problems of the fourteenth century. All of the orders suffered to some extent in the fourteenth century, but the late thirteenth century decline in some monastic houses appears to have occurred for a variety of reasons. The fluctuating economic conditions may partly have been a factor, among other reasons there are references to the houses themselves being badly run.[100]

The success of some of the Augustinian houses in the fourteenth century (Carmarthen priory valued at £200 in 1400) reveals that the reasons behind the decline experienced by some houses, notably the Cistercians, were due to a complex series of factors. The Cistercians may have been too dependant on wool, whilst the Augustinian economy had been more diversified all along. The Augustinians also had a long tradition of recruiting locally which meant that they were strong in numbers and as such were, perhaps, better prepared to endure outbreaks of the plague. The Franciscans and Dominicans appear to have flourished in the thirteenth century and do not appear to have suffered the late thirteenth century decline experienced by the Benedictines. It seems that agriculture was hit early, in terms of the general economic downturn. The monasteries that were not dependent on land based activity, but which

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[100] Williams, D.H. (2001) 58

were engaged in other forms of commercial activity took longer to feel the full economic effects.

The Cistercians initially accumulated wealth by rearing sheep and cattle. They were at the height of their prosperity during the thirteenth century. During the fourteenth century, with the Black Death and fluctuations in the wool market, the numbers within the orders dwindled, reducing output. There was less profit to be made from wool and diversification was seen as the key to survival. Wage earning labourers, the *mercenaries*, were hired to work Cistercian lands on behalf of the Order and other lands were leased out to private individuals to provide additional income. The extent to which *mercenaries* were being used in the late fourteenth century is evident from the surviving accounts of Tintern's Merthyrgeryn grange. These accounts also reveal that profit margins from these activities were low. It was the leasing out of lands in the fourteenth century that ultimately led to the point of no return: the breaking up of grange estates, so that they became almost indistinguishable from secular manors.

Many of the orders recruited locally, so there were a fair few Welshmen in their ranks by the close of the study period. When Rhys ap Grufudd recaptured Carmarthenshire for the Welsh in the late twelfth century he took over Whitland abbey, and instead of dissolving it he endowed it generously.[101] This action made a statement that went beyond Pembrokeshire. It was ultimately the support of the monastic orders for the Welsh that, overall, harmed both what prosperity they had and their status, especially following the Glyndŵr revolt in the early fifteenth century.[102]

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[101] Gray, M. (1998) "The Politics of Cistercian Grange Foundation and Endowment in South East Wales", *Med. Set. Res. Group Annual Report* 13, 20

[102] *Ibid.*, 20

The evidence from the study of the monastic orders has revealed that they engaged widely in economic activity as both produces and consumers. However, as religious groups they were part of a much wider European network that was ideally placed to do this. The monasteries had the resources to allow them to make longer journeys to market that would have been possible for ordinary people. Therefore, in answer to Beresford's third question the evidence from this chapter has revealed that members of monastic communities did not shorten their journeys due to difficulties of transport but overall they were something of an exception.

Chapter Seven

The Role of the Burgesses and Travelling Merchants

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will consider the role played by the ordinary townsfolk and burgesses, in the development of trade and the influence they had on the transport system between 1100 and 1400. Additionally, it will investigate evidence for the role played by travelling merchants and consider the extent of the influence that they held. It has already been noted that in much of south Wales commercial systems were in place which aided itinerant traders in going about their everyday life. Earlier in this thesis it was demonstrated that in Glamorgan, Gwent, southern Carmarthenshire and, possibly, Pembrokeshire markets were held in neighbouring locations on successive days so as to allow a trader to complete a 'circuit' of markets. In Breconshire it was shown that a more complex picture emerged with a distinct pattern of same day markets. This reflected the changing fortunes experienced by communities within the south Wales lordships.

This chapter will continue to address Beresford's third question as to the length of journeys ordinary people made to market as well as examining the overall influence of these groups on transport and trade. It will commence with a consideration of the rights granted in borough charters, rights which were designed to encourage burgesses to reside in Marcher towns. The subsequent influence of the burgesses themselves will then be evaluated. This will be done by examining evidence of tenure and by identifying the existence of craft and merchant guilds. The enigmatic evidence for individuals who held the rights of burgesses, but who did not hold burgage tenure, the *censarii* and 'burgesses of the wind' will be considered. It has been previously thought the class of traders described by these terms were more

or less the same,[1] however it will be revealed that there were subtle distinctions which makes a consideration of the exact descriptive term used in documentary sources prudent.

7.2 Burgesses' Charter Rights

The part played by the Marcher lords in establishing the basic framework for trade has been discussed in an earlier chapter. Welshmen were initially excluded from the Marcher towns and so inducements were made to attract merchants from far away to an area that was economically fertile, yet consistently vulnerable to attack. Burgesses were essentially free men who rented their plot of land or burgage from the local lord. Many of the Welsh towns were garrison towns which offered both burgesses and travelling merchants opportunities in providing the attendant supplies and services that a large military force required.

In Brecon a late thirteenth century charter, thought to have originated between 1277 and 1282, details extensive rights and liberties granted to burgesses including: control over the tolls of the town, of its suburbs and the extra mural trading centre at Trecastle, as well as controlling tolls on the boundaries of the lordship at Tir Ralph, Ystradfellte, Penderyn and Penpont. Consequently, burgesses in Brecon gained income from all non-burgesses of Brecon who passed through. Due to the fact that Brecon lay on the northern of the two major routeways into south Wales, these were very generous benefits indeed and were designed to encourage merchants and artisans to become burgesses of Brecon. Rights such as these, along with the right to form a guild, meant that the burgesses were given a significant role in the running of the town. This approach appears to have paid off, as by the late thirteenth century the

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[1] Notably by Maurice Beresford, see p.130

lordships of Brecon and Llandovery were flourishing, as new markets were established along the main highway into mid- and west Wales.[2]

Subsequent lords often found these benefits to be too generous for their liking. In the case of Brecon at least, it appears that the privileges granted were initially successful. In 1340 the lord of Brecon, Humphrey of Hereford, revoked many of the liberties contained in the earlier charters to the annoyance of the burgesses. Bailiffs were appointed to run the administration of the town and for the next fifteen years - until the privileges were restored to the burgesses in 1365 - the lord yielded £119 profit yearly. As William Rees points out, this was substantially more than the £71 the lordship was averaging later on in the 1630s.[3] However, the success of the lordship of Brecon was built on pastoral activities of cattle and sheep rearing. Economic conditions in the seventeenth century favoured the growth of arable crops as opposed to livestock.[4]

Burgesses were also granted legal rights and protection. An early Swansea charter states, *Justitia mea non placitabit burgensem sine burgense teste* - 'My justice shall not prosecute a burgess without witness.'[5] Similarly in Cardiff burgesses could not be expected to attend the hundred court if they were about to depart on business outside of the town and could provide witness to that effect. The rule being that if a burgess had, 'one foot in the stirrup,' when told of the summons then they would be free to go about their business instead of attending court.[6] In return, burgesses were expected to reside and conduct their business within the town.

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[2] See chapter two: The Influence of Lordship in SE Wales

[3] PRO: DL/29/671/10810; Rees, W. (1924), 224

[4] Weeks, R. (2002) 19-20

[5] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* Swansea 1153 - 84, 249

[6] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* Cardiff 1147 - 83, 145

Among the rights granted to Swansea burgesses were extensive rights of pasture, 'for feeding their herds as far as they can go in one day and return to their homes the same night.'[7] Burgesses could also keep their pigs in the lord's wood and cattle on land outside of the town. Fishing rights were also important to the coastal community of Swansea who were permitted to keep fish traps between Blackpill and *Pulkanen* in the bay, if any porpoise or sturgeon happened to get caught in any of the traps it was to be forfeited to the lord who in 1153 would pay 1*s*. or a quarter of wheat in compensation.[8] Commercial activity in Welsh towns was inextricably linked to rural life, with markets acting as places for the redistribution of consumer goods from the surrounding hinterland of the town. As such, burgesses played a role in the rural economy outside of towns. Some burgesses were also farmers who hired labourers to work their lands. Others leased lands that they were granted to them by the lord. Swansea burgesses were subject to rights at the expense of 'foreign' merchants who were not allowed to sell cut cloths by retail and could only buy skins and hides from a burgess.[9] The provision may be regarded as the origin of a merchant trade guild in the town. There is, nevertheless, no formal mention of the existence of a guild in Swansea until 1655, when Oliver Cromwell's charter refers to, 'one free guild of merchants within the town of Swansea.'[10] Early Swansea charters state that Swansea burgesses, 'may go and come through all our land with all their wares, buying, selling and trafficking well and peacefully, freely quietly and honourably.'[11] For these advantages, however, burgesses were compelled to do military service for their lord, a condition that is featured in twelfth century Swansea charters.[12] This was not an

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[7] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* 1153-84, Swansea 58

[8] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* 1153-84, Swansea 63

[9] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* 1153-84 Swansea, 89

[10] Francis G.G. (ed.) (1867) *Charters Granted to Swansea, the Chief Borough in the Seignory of Gower in the County of Glamorgan*, (London, Privately Printed) 27

[11] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* 1215, Swansea 216

[12] *Brit. Bor. Chart.*1153-84 Swansea, 89

uncommon requirement within the towns of south Wales with a general condition being that if the expedition was for a day it would be at the expense of the individual burgess, if the matter meant that a burgess travelled so far as to be unable to return home at night then the expense would be incurred by the lord, who in the case of Swansea granted his burgesses collectively half of any booty that he himself may have claims on.[13] The granting of a wide range of rights to burgesses in south Wales is likely to have been an attempt to offset what at times could be a very insecure urban lifestyle.

Aside from measures to attract settlers there were also provisions to exclude certain individuals from entering into a town. In many cases provision was made to exclude Welshmen. Kenfig's 1330 charter includes the provision that, 'No loose women, naughtipacks, or tramps' were were to be allowed into the borough.[14] Specific rights granted in borough charters may appear to have been quite minor but they could make a big difference in terms of day to day life. Burgesses were usually allowed to bake their own bread, a right that was not shared by ordinary manorial tenants. In Swansea, burgesses held the right to bake bread in their own ovens, as well as to brew their own ale, and do, 'all things for their profit freely and quietly.'[15] In the latter half of the twelfth century the burgesses of both Cardiff and Swansea were paying 1*s.* yearly, 'for all service,' which Ballard suggests may have been a form of poll tax.[16] Such payments may have been used for general maintenance within the town as a supplement to murage and pavage.

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[13] *Brit. Bor. Chart.*1153-84 Swansea, 89

[14]GRO: B/K 1; see also Clark, G.T. (1871) "Kenfig Charter", *Arch. Camb.* 62, 330

[15] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* 1153-84, 51

[16] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* 1147-84, 47

Trading networks covered wide distances both within England and Wales and beyond. This was only to be expected where a particular lord held extensive lands in more than one region, after all it would have been in his best interests to encourage such trade. By the late thirteenth century it appears that burgesses were operating over a wide area, owning burgages in more than one town. Burgesses from south Wales towns were owning burgages in English boroughs; for example, in the 1273 Patent Roll one John Long, a Cardiff mercer owned burgages in Bristol and Southampton, and was additionally granted a licence along with a Southampton merchant, Bernard de Hampton, for the export of wool.[17] Cardiff burgesses were branching out during the thirteenth century, acquiring more than just the burgage they held in person. Walter de Rengny held two burgages in Cardiff which he purchased from John le Porc.[18] Other Cardiff burgesses are known to have rented burgages in Kenfig.[19] Burgages could be sub let and those who hired the burgage would be granted the same rights as a burgage holder, even if they only let half of the burgage.[20] So whilst a town may have had for instance 200 burgages it could actually have possessed twice as many burgesses. In 1270 Simon Webir granted Richard Bernard a burgage outside of the borough of Cardiff, presumably referring to a location beyond the town walls.[21] There would also be a substantial number of people involved in the day-to-day life of settlement who never attained burgess status, (the *censarii* being an example). Burgesses were generally free to sell their burgages as well as sub let them, but there were conditions which differed slightly between towns as to how they could go about doing this. At Cardiff and Haverfordwest and virtually every town in between, a burgess could sell or mortgage their burgage, providing it

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[17] *Cal. Pat Roll.* 1273

[18] *Clark Cartae*, no. 646, 702

[19] See *Clark Cartae* no. 738, 803 for example

[20] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* 1147 - 83, Cardiff, 102

[21] *Clark Cartae* no. 736, 801

was theirs to sell. In Cardiff it seems that it was unnecessary to inform the agents of the lord, namely the reeve and bailiff, whereas in Haverfordwest there was such a requirement.[22] In 1215 King John introduced laws which allowed properties to be inherited, which relieved a previously complicated system. Indeed if a burgage was inherited in Cardiff the successor could immediately enter his inheritance, whereas 1*s.* was to be paid to the reeve before a similar action could be taken in Haverfordwest.[23] In turn the property could be sold, as occurred in 1276 when a Kenfig burgess purchased a burgage in Cardiff from the daughter of a recently deceased Cardiff burgess.[24] In Swansea if a burgess wished to sell his burgage he was required to pay 4*d.* to the toll collector after selling the burgage in order to be quit. If he were unable to sell the burgage he was allowed to do with it as he wished, and if he went away on business leaving another to continue its upkeep he was entitled to return to it later, as it would remain his own.[25]

In summary, it was the Marcher lords who provided the structure but it was the burgesses who made that structure work, by taking up the opportunities offered and participating in day to day economic activity. It was the richer burgesses who leased mills and other resources within the Marcher lordships. This allowed them greater opportunities to accumulate wealth. John Yonge became a wealthy burgess of Brecon by taking up such opportunities.[26] Some reeves and bailiffs also prospered, notably John Giffard of Brimpsfield and Richard Moghlom of Hay who, in 1374, had interests in fisheries, two mills and demesne land.[27] Welshmen too, had, by the close

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[22] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* 1147 - 83, 66,74; Haverfordwest 1189 - 1219, 67,75

[23] *Ibid.*, 75

[24] *Clark Cartae* no. 730, 796

[25] *Brit. Bor. Chart.*1153-84 Swansea, 65

[26] PRO: DL29/671/10810/22; Davies, R.R. (1978) *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales 1282 - 1400* (Oxford, Clarendon Press) 405

[27] *Ibid.*, 405

of the fourteenth century, accumulated great wealth through the hiring of manorial resources. Among them was Meurig ap Adam of Whitecastle who profited from leasing burgages and mills in Grosmont and further afield in Brecon.[28]

7.3 Travelling Merchants

The distinction between travelling merchants and fixed store traders as being different individuals is difficult to maintain. In all probability some burgesses also visited other towns where they may or may not have held burgage tenure in order to trade on market days and at the annual fairs. It has already been seen that in the thirteenth century burgesses in places like Cardiff and Kenfig held burgages in other towns, both within the March and elsewhere. Peddlers travelling from town to town are not directly evidenced from the documentary sources but this does not preclude them from existing. There were, in all probability, merchants who made their living by collecting local produce at the weekly markets and exchanging it with foreign merchants at the Saturday markets. Then, in turn imported items could be sold locally throughout the week at markets within the region.

It seems that the institutions established by the Marcher lords were flourishing during the thirteenth century. At Carmarthen a second annual fair was established on St. George's day in 1299. It is reported to have been well attended by merchants who had travelled by land as well as by boat to trade there.[29] Carmarthen benefited from being one of the staple outlets for the export of wool and so would have been able to attract merchants from far afield.

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[28] *Ibid.*, 405

[29] Rhys, M. (ed.) (1936) *Ministers' Accounts for west Wales 1277 - 1306* (Cardiff, Board of Celtic Studies)

The economic growth of the thirteenth century did not continue into the fourteenth century and the following entry in the Patent Roll of 1307 would curb the activities of the itinerant trader:

> '. . .(to) other boroughs in Wales . . . no one in parts neighbouring to the borough within a circuit of five leagues of them shall buy or sell wares, however they may be called, except in the boroughs themselves, under pain of forfeiture, the wares to be taken. . .by the bailiff. . .excepting those which are sold in places privileged by charter, and excepting bread and ale bought in gross in the said boroughs, which may afterwards be lawfully sold by the buyers in the country, excepting also flesh and fish, cut cheeses, eggs, fowl and minute articles for sale, nevertheless wax or tallow shall not be sold in gross without the boroughs.'[30]

Markets and fairs had sprung up in a range of rural locations in the late thirteenth century and there is little doubt that trade would have been taking place informally, as Dyer describes it the, 'hidden trade.'[31] The above statement can be viewed as an attempt to channel trade back into the chartered boroughs, where it could be subject to the tolls from the lord.

7.4 Merchant Classes

Of particular interest are a specific group of merchants often referred to by secondary authorities as chensers, or in the Latin form *censarii*.[32] Their existence is attested to extensively in south Wales, where they appear in the surviving records of many settlements. There are few accounts of traders identified as being *censarii*

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[30] *Cal. Pat Roll.* 1307 - 13, 578

[31] Dyer, C.C. (1992) 'The Hidden Trade of the Middle Ages: Evidence from the west Midlands of England', *J. Hist. Geog.*, 18, 143-52

[32] Lewis, E.A. (1903) "The Development of Industry and Commerce in Wales During the Middle Ages" *Trans. Royal Hist. Soc*, new series 17, 121-73; William Rees uses the spelling *censers*: Rees, W. (1924) *South Wales and the March 1284-1415 : A Social and Agrarian History*, 285

elsewhere.[33] In essence *censarii* were a merchant class who paid for a licence, or *cens* usually set at 1*s.* a year, in order to trade in a settlement but who did not actually hold burgage tenure. Beresford considers them to be 'burgesses of the wind', as the documents often refer to a particular merchant group as *burgensibus de vento et vico* or 'burgesses of the wind and of the street.'[34] It was commonly thought by Beresford and others that *censarii* and *burgensibus de vento et vico* meant the same thing, and are therefore interchangeable terms. Other sources refer to *burgensibus aduenticii* or 'incoming burgesses,'[35] whilst ministers' accounts from Builth record payment from 'portmen' who paid portmanrent in order to trade in the town.[36] William Rees considers portmen to be the same as chensers and burgesses of the wind.[37] Yet, this raises the question as to why, if all these terms meant the same thing, were so many different terms being used? One explanation would be to say that different terms were used in different regions, or used in particular lordships. However, documents consulted for this study, predominantly ministers' accounts, have revealed that there are some, admittedly rare, instances where combinations of *censarii*, *burgensibus aduenticii* and *burgensibus de vento et vico* are to be found within the same document. Often the lord receives income from both chensers and incoming burgesses, but they are listed separately.[38]

This implies that to the officials who compiled the documents there was a very real distinction between these respective groups. The issue has been clouded by the fact that burgesses of the wind would have also paid *cens* and by E.A. Lewis who

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[33] The *censarii* are not unknown in England. See, for example, Walmsley, J.F.R. (1968) "The 'Censarii' of Burton Abbey and the Domesday Population," *North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies* 8, 73-80

[34] Beresford, M (1967), 225

[35] PRO: SC6/1218/7

[36] PRO: SC6/1157/5

[37] Rees, W. (1924), 222, 293

[38] See for example, NLW: MS 1346b, PRO: SC6/1218/9

stated in absolute terms that chensers lived in bond hamlets and only entered towns in order to trade.[39] The wording of the documents needs to be considered. Burgesses of the wind have been described in extant sources as 'diverse men . . . who hold no burgages or land but pay . . . to enjoy the liberty of a burgess.'[40] Whereas an account from Tenby describes chensers thus: 'poor wretches that dwell within the town but who are not burgesses.'[41] The distinction appears to be a residential one, with the burgesses of the wind essentially being travelling merchants, or producers from nearby rural areas who visited the town to sell produce. This latter group could well be those described as 'incoming burgesses,' people with a financial stake in the economy of the area, with burgesses of the wind simply being itinerant traders. Chensers, on the other hand, were already living within the town but were not burgesses. It seems that *censarii* were essentially an elevated peasant class who paid money to the lord *in lieu* of manual service. Some obligations appear to have remained - for example, attending the shire courts and messenger service - but these were not activities associated with the peasantry. This allowed the *censarii* greater commercial freedoms than ordinary peasants. At the time of the Black Death in 1349 a Carmarthen ministers' account simply states: 'Nothing from the *censarii* who used to reside in the vill because they are dead by pestilence.'[42] This adds further support to the notion that chensers were resident in the town. The factor that differentiates portmen from the other groups is not apparent at the present time. Indeed, it is entirely possible that with time the distinctions between those who paid for a licence to trade in the boroughs became blurred.

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[39] Lewis, E.A. (1903), 165-6

[40] PRO: SC6/1218/9

[41] NLW: MS 1346b

[42] PRO: SC6/1221/8

Therefore, whilst the burgesses of the wind, chensers, incoming burgesses and portmen were the same in that they were not burgesses in the traditional sense, and that they paid for a licence to trade, there was undoubtedly a distinction between them. As a result of this there is no reason to continue using the terms interchangeably and future studies should note the distinctions, which could help in charting the population density of a borough. This would lead to a revision of some of the estimates based on burgess numbers featured in chapter three. For example, Abergavenny had approximately 230 burgesses in 1260, with as many as 40 additional *censarii*.[43]

7.5 Evidence of Activity

A Cardiff charter of 1340 reveals some of the trades practiced within the medieval town as well as revealing the limitations imposed on the activities of the burgesses there. It also points to the extent to which the lord would go to in order to protect his interests within his Welsh towns. The extract reads:

> 'All mercers, as well drapers, curriers, fellmongers, glovers, as divers others who live by selling and buying within our lordship of Glamorgan and Morgannou must dwell in the towns of the burgh and not upland. And they shall in everywise make sale of their wares in marts, market places, and in towns of burgh, and not elsewhere.'[44]

If the stipulation regarding dwelling in the uplands had appeared in an earlier charter it could initially have been seen as designed to exclude the Welsh and encourage the growth of the town. However, as it only appeared in 1340, the timing suggests that it was an additional measure to protect the status of the borough and

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[43] PRO: SC6/1094/11: 1260 Abergavenny, '40*s*. received from the *censarii*'

[44] Mathews, J.H. (ed.) 6 vols. (1898 - 1911) *Cardiff Records,* (Cardiff, Cardiff Corporation) (hereafter: *Cardiff Records*) Vol. I, 25

re-enforce the fact that the lord did not want burgesses of the town trading with potential adversaries. The prevailing conditions of the time need to be borne in mind. There was a downturn in the economy, as a result of warfare, disease and agricultural distress. Also, in the later fourteenth century Welshmen were playing an increasing role in urban as well as rural trading activity. A receivers account from Gower reveals that Welshmen were leasing mills in Swansea in 1367.[45]

In 1316 a Cardiff burgess, John Odyn, was charged with supplying, 'corn, wine and other victuals to Llewelyn Bren, Welshman, and his accomplices.'[46] The exact circumstances of this sale are not known, yet trading with the Welsh was likely to have not been uncommon, particularly for burgesses in Neath and Llantrissant, where Welshmen participated in trade from early on.[47] It is ironic that Llewelyn Bren was buying supplies from a burgess in a town that would have been one of the subjects of the rebels' aggression, had the rising in other parts of the lordship been successful. When making the transaction, Odyn may or may not have known what was being planned. If he did he may have doubted its success and perhaps felt that the rebels would not realistically reach or take Cardiff, but it seems odd that he would knowingly support something that would threaten his very existence. The petition for the trial of John Odyn, who was held at Cardiff gaol, was issued on 18 September 1316.[48] Potentially this could have disturbed burgesses and traders in Cardiff and other Welsh towns and make them less inclined to do business with the Welsh, in fear that such actions could be taken against them. In other words, Odyn was made an example of. Trading with Welshmen may have been a long held practice for Cardiff

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[45] NLW: Badmington MS. no. 2611

[46] *Cal. Pat. Roll* 1313-17,545

[47] *Cal. IPM* IV no. 435

[48] *Cal. Pat. Roll* 1313-17, 545

merchants and action taken against Odyn may have been more a reaction to subsequent events rather than the fact he was dealing with the Welsh.

7.6 Guilds

A measure of the influence held by burgesses within a town comes from the existence or otherwise of a guild. Unfortunately the dearth of sources does not make it possible to present the complete picture as to the existence and distribution of guilds. Essentially there were two types of guild: merchant and craft. These guilds acted almost as a cartel, in that they influenced prices and as a body of opinion held considerable sway on the commercial activity of a town. Table 7.1 provides a list of towns which are recorded as possessing guilds during the Middle Ages

Neath's guild was given formal recognition in 1397 but had been in existence prior to this. Kenfig's guild is mentioned in 1330 in association with a 'Guildhall' which also implies that the guild there had been in existence for quite some time. Pembroke's charter of 1154 contains the earliest known reference to a guild merchant in a planted town.[49] Newport's guild may have existed since at least 1340, when the existence of such an organisation is alluded to in the Patent Roll,[50] a guild is only actually mentioned in the 1385 charter, leading some scholars to question whether it simply existed in name only.[51] Cardiff received its formal licence for a guild in 1340, however there seems little doubt that a guild was in existence for some time prior to this, possibly since the late twelfth century. Other locations, for instance, Cowbridge, Usk and Monmouth were all likely to have some form of guild in operation during the study period. Unfortunately, no sources survive which testify to the existence of such.

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[49] Beresford (1967) *op. cit.*, 219

[50] *Cal. Pat. Roll.* 1340-3, 531

[51] NRL: CRO/C9/CJG/JJ; Rees, W. (ed.) (1951) *Charters of the Borough of Newport*, (Newport, Newport Corporation) 9

7.7 English and Welsh in Trade: Conflict and Integration

The more attractive the opportunity, the greater the prospect of attracting incoming settlers. Initially it was Anglo-Normans who were sought to take up the role of burgesses within the new towns as the Welsh were initially excluded. Soulsby has described these early foundations as being English towns on nominally Welsh lands.[52] Nonetheless contact, with the Welsh was inevitable and by 1400 Welshmen had become burgesses in towns such as Kenfig and were selling their burgages to other Welshmen.[53] An entry in the Patent Roll dated 13 March 1242 at Hertford states:

> 'To J. Lestrange and J. de Munemuth. The king's will is that the land of England and the land of Wales be common as to English as to Welsh to carry on business on both sides. . .and mandate to them to permit this to be so.'[54]

This entry from the reign of Henry III at the very least suggests that this had not always been the case. Interestingly, the king had been petitioned by John Lestrange and John de Munemuth, who were perhaps first or second and possibly third generation Anglo-Norman settlers. It suggests that discriminatory practices were being levelled against them, although their names suggest that whilst they were not Welsh, they were Welsh based burgesses. Thus, it should be considered whether taking up residency at a Marcher town in south Wales tarred the settlers with the same brush as the Welsh, if not officially, at least in the eyes of their English counterparts.

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[52] Soulsby, I. (1983) *passim*

[53] *Clark Cartae* no. 1088, 1437

[54] *Cal. Pat. Roll.* 1242

Location	Earliest Reference to Guild	Specified as a Craft Guild or Merchant Guild?	Source
Brecon	1308	not specified	PRO: DL29/730/20/4
Newport	1385	not specified	NRL: CRO/C9/CJG/JJ
Llantrissant	1346	not specified	PRO SC6/1202/6
Pembroke	1154	not specified	Brit. Bor. Chart 1154-89 p.205
Kenfig	1330	not specified	GRO: B/K1
Cardiff	1340	merchant & craft	Cardiff Records I, p.15
Swansea	1655	merchant	Swansea Charter p.27
Aberafan	n.d.: pre-1330	not specified	Clark Cartae III, 922-4
Dinefwr	1363	merchant	PRO SC6/1158/10
Cardigan	1249	merchant	Cal. Pat. Roll. 1247-58 p. 52
Haverfordwest	1250	merchant	Cal. Pembs. Rec. I 126-7
Neath	1397	not specified	PRO SC6/1202/10

Table 7.1: Guilds identified in the study area

Further evidence comes from a petition of grievances presented to the king by the tenants of Builth in 1315.[55] At the time the lordship was subject to royal administration and the keeper of the castle, his men and the bailiffs were the subject of complaint by tenants of Builth. Two such burgesses are named; William Bagot and William Martyn, as it was they who presented the complaint to Parliament. The complaint centred on alleged abuses by John de Cherleton, the keeper of Builth

[55] *Cal. Pat Roll.* 1313 - 17, 322-3

castle, his bailiffs, ministers and men. It is interesting to note also that whilst Builth was considered a town, many of the grievances in the case reflect that burgesses were engaged in 'rural' activities. For example: Oxen, cows and other animals were wintered at the expense of the complainants, who in turn were compelled to cut the corn, mow the meadows and plough the fields belonging to the castle. Additionally, livestock including lambs, calves, cattle, geese and hens were reportedly moved from the houses of the complainants.[56] The 'better persons' of the country were described as being heavily ransomed and having to endure 'unbearable burdens' imposed upon them so as to make them abandon their tenements and withdraw from the said country.[57]

On 12 June 1315 Bagot and Martyn were charged with assault and trespasses on the men of the castle of Builth, the bailiffs and ministers and in turn Bagot and Martyn charged the men of the castle, the bailiffs and ministers with assault against them.[58] This episode suggests that any 'abuses' were not simply inflicted on the Welsh alone, but on the Anglo-Norman colonists themselves. Incidents such as this would have done little for consumer confidence or in attracting incomers. Merchants would have avoided areas on hearing of events like this, rather than get caught up in such circumstances.

Attitudes towards the Welsh are evident in an extract from a charter granted to Chester in 1300 which reads:

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[56] *Ibid.*, Often without payment despite the same items being available in common markets and fairs.

[57] *Ibid.* 322-3; in this case the bailiffs were accused of delaying the local court for eight days to the injury of the tenants, after the eight days flooding occurred preventing horsemen and footmen from approaching the court. Consequently thirty six men and women fearing the 'harshness and cruelty' of the bailiffs entered a boat to reach the court and were overwhelmed by the force of the river.

[58] *Ibid.* 322

> '. . .If a citizen make any purchases in the open day and before witnesses, and suit shall come from France or England who can duly deraign the purchase, the citizen who has made the purchase shall be quit of the Earl and his bailiffs, by losing and restoring the thing bought, if he cannot otherwise satisfy the claimant. But if the suit be of a Welshman who can duly deraign the thing purchased, the claimant shall restore to the citizen the price which the citizen can show to have paid. . .'[59]

It would appear that the rights granted to burgesses who took up holdings in the southern March of Wales were, to some extent, a poisoned chalice, as the status of second generation and subsequent generations of burgesses was somewhat eroded. Questions remain that cannot be adequately resolved. For instance, did second or third generation Anglo-Norman settlers consider themselves to be Welsh by 1300 and were they considered to be Welsh by their contemporaries in England? To what extent did the colonists maintain their cultural identity or identify with local culture? These are fascinating issues that deserve more detailed consideration but which falls outside the remit of the present study. By 1385, Welshmen were serving as soldiers in Anglo-Norman armies. More than two hundred were recruited at Builth to go to York that year, led by a Welshman, Dafydd ap Ieuan.[60]

7.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the role of burgesses and travelling merchants in developing the economy of south Wales in the Middle Ages was fundamental. The Marcher lords could, and did, put the trading structure in place but it was the everyday townsfolk and the itinerant traders who made the system work. Between 1100 and 1400 a series of subtle changes can be detected: from the generous rights granted in early charters, to later revocation by lords who considered the rights to be too generous; from the

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[59] *Cal. Chart. Roll* 1257 - 1300, 486-7

[60] PRO: SC6/1221/16

initial exclusion of Welshmen from Marcher towns to them taking up burgess status; to burgesses from south Wales towns holding multiple properties both in south Wales and parts of England.

Other factors were also at work. The high price of wool on the European wool market in the thirteenth century led to great prosperity for burgesses of Brecon. By setting themselves up in the March, Anglo-Norman colonists were taking a risk, yet the lure of financial reward proved attractive to the more adventurous. As this chapter has discussed, merchants such as Simon Webir at Cardiff and John Yonge in Brecon accumulated great wealth in the late thirteenth century. The lords did not govern all aspects of everyday life, but they did put the mechanisms in place to encourage economic vitality against a politically unstable backdrop. In turn, the burgesses benefited from this.

Wider economic and social conditions were undoubtedly an influence between the opening of the twelfth century and the close of the fourteenth. The economic distress of 1315-22, combined with rebellion by the Welsh caused a major downturn in the early fourteenth century. As the century progressed, sporadic outbreaks of the plague were to damage the communities of many Marcher towns across south Wales. In 1361 manors near Carmarthen had vacant tenements as a result of the plague.[61] Of the more than two hundred burgages recorded in Pembroke in 1362 25½ were vacant in 1292,[62] whilst at Penallt, in Usk lordship, rents were suspended in 1400 because 'all the tenants left the country and certain of them are killed.'

This chapter has found that prosperous men in the thirteenth century were not hindered by difficulties in transport as to which markets they attended or in which

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[61] PRO: SC6/1159/1

[62] PRO: SC6/1305/11

towns they held interests. Affluent burgesses like John Long who travelled between his properties in Cardiff, Bristol and Southampton, or the lords themselves who traded goods between their estates which stretched across England and Wales.[63] Unfortunately, the situation for many ordinary folk is less clear due to the paucity of evidence. This chapter has been able to shed light on some of the more affluent members of society but it seems that the majority did not travel far to market because they did not need to and to travel any further would have been too expensive and, possibly, dangerous. Like the previous chapter, which detailed the monastic orders, this chapter has provided information to answer Beresford's third question. As in the previous chapter, this chapter has shown that an important section of society, in terms of trade, were not unduly hindered by transport difficulties, yet overall they may have represented a small section of the overall population. The majority, the ordinary people or countrymen as Beresford calls them, would have found that high transport costs and poor inland transport did shorten the journey they were willing to make to market.

The level of prosperity achieved in south Wales between 1100 and 1400 was influenced by the balance of Marcher lords, who provided the structure, and the everyday participants in trading activity; the burgesses and travelling merchants. It was these two groups who effectively organised the produce from the wider region to be re-distributed. The height of prosperity for both burgesses and travelling merchants was the thirteenth century. The seeds had been sown in the twelfth century, but wider economic conditions on a British and European scale helped to facilitate growth. As a result, a successful land owning merchant class emerged in south Wales during the thirteenth century. This success was not to endure as warfare and disease led to economic deterioration that lasted until the agrarian and the industrial revolutions.

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[63] See p.226

Chapter Eight

Raw Materials, Natural Resources and Goods

8.1 Introduction

So far this thesis has considered the trading structure that was established by the Marcher lords and the role of burgesses and artisans in making that structure work. The influence of the monastic orders on transport and trade has also been considered, with particular reference to their activities in rearing sheep and cattle. This chapter will consider the evidence for other forms of industrial activity. It will commence by considering the provisioning of castles. The castle under-pinned the conquest of south Wales and it was under their protection that markets and fairs developed. The process of building a castle in itself involved bringing in skilled labour and utilising resources from far afield. Once established, depending on its size and status, there were a range of people involved in the day-to-day life of the castle, all of whom would need to be fed and would make use of various tools, equipment and other items in everyday life. This chapter will contribute to addressing several of Beresford's questions; it will consider the type of goods being moved and how the transport system influenced this. It will also consider the available natural resources and how townsfolk made use of them. The third of Beresford's questions will be borne in mind when considering the reasons why ordinary people went to market.

Following on from considering how castles were provisioned, the next section will examine the use of natural resources and the raw materials that could be derived from them. Woodland and forestry will be examined as examples of a plentiful natural resource. These are also resources that appear in surviving contemporary accounts. So too was cultivable land, on which sheep and cattle could be grazed and crops grown. The goods that could be derived from the exploitation of these resources, such as the use of wood for charcoal burning, will be examined. Evidence for secular corn and fulling mills will be sought. Other types of documented goods

will be discussed, notably beer and wine, as these items often feature in extant sources. Overall this chapter will provide illumination on the types of goods finding their way in markets across south Wales and how these activities related to the wider landscape around them.

8.2 Provisioning Castles

To function effectively a castle needed to be stocked with provisions as well as a supply of arms and other military equipment. The range of goods represented in a surviving inventory from Caerphilly castle in the thirteenth century is quite remarkable. The items range from domestic items such as cutlery through to leather, cloth, linen, various foodstuffs, Irish silk, silver as well as iron, lead and stonework for repairs to the castle.[1] There seems little reason to doubt that, if goods such as these were making their way into the castle, that they were finding their way into the town as well. Castles provided accommodation for the Marcher lord and his entourage and, on occasion for the travelling monarch and his court. Evidence from the Pipe Rolls following the capture of Dryslwyn castle from Rhys ap Maredudd by Edward I in 1287 are particularly interesting.[2] These accounts document the sale of animals and produce held in the castle at the time of capture in order to raise funds and continue for the period that Alan de Plagenta was custodian. The documents mention one hundred and forty seven animals as belonging to the castle along with stocks of hay, apples, ox-hides and nuts. Expenses included £129 4*s.* 10*d.* spent on masons, quarrymen and labourers and £109 3*s.* 8*d.* spent on carpenters, smiths and charcoal burners. In addition, £36 5*s.* 1*d.* was being spent on the felling of wood around the castle.[3] At Neath castle in 1314, 2½ casks of wine were bought for the

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[1] Rees, W. (1974) *Caerphilly Castle and its Place in the Annals of Glamorgan* (Caerphilly, Caerphilly Local History Society)

[2] Webster, P. (1987) "Dryslwyn Castle" in Kenyon, J.R. & Avent, R. (eds.) (1987) *Castles in Wales and the Marches: Essays in Honour of D.J. Cathcart King*, 89-104

[3] *Ibid.*, 90

store of the castle at £6 13*s.* 4*d.*, along with one thousand gallons of ale bought for £4 3*s.* 4*d.*, whilst thirty three bulls and cows cost 10*s.* each.[4] The following year expenditure aside from sundry items included fifteen loads and eight pieces of iron at 31*s.* 9*d.* in addition to fourteen pieces of lead for which 25*s.* 8*d.* was paid.[5] Overall, corn, wine, flour and victuals were the items most commonly brought in by sea from France to provision castles in Wales.[6]

8.3 Raw Materials and Natural Resources: Woodland and Forestry

A distinction can be made between forests and woodland in the Middle Ages. Forests were subject to specific regulations governing their use by ordinary folk, woodland areas were more accessible for ordinary people and were an important asset to any community. The lord retained some control in the common woods, yet this varied locally, depending on the attitude of the respective Marcher lord. Forests were initially intended as reserves for the purpose of hunting by the social elite, however by the fourteenth century a distinct shift in emphasis can be detected. The upkeep of game was still an important part of the forest economy, yet other uses began to play a more important role. In essence, the activities that were being exploited in areas of woodland became increasingly common in the forests, although the much greater extent of land covered by the forest allowed wider exploitation. Aside from game, other issues of the forest included keeping pigs - burgesses of Newport were permitted to rear pigs in the Forest of Machen[7] - rearing birds of prey as well as the multiple uses offered by timber, bark, charcoal, tree foliage, nuts and fruits.

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[4] PRO: SC6/1202/6 printed in Hopkins A. (ed.) (1988) *Medieval Neath: Ministers Accounts 1262-1316*, 38

[5] PRO: SC6/1202/7

[6] *Cal. Pat Roll.* 1281-92, 59

[7] PRO: SC6/924/23

Additionally there was honey and beeswax, dyestuffs and, occasionally, peat was extracted.

Woodland was both a plentiful and a useful natural resource and as such was often subject to careful management. When the Normans arrived in south Wales in the late eleventh century they found it to be an abundant resource that was already being widely used. It became far more extensively exploited in the following centuries. At Cefn Hirgoed (meaning 'ridge of the long wood') in Glamorgan, the removal of woodland appears to have begun in the early medieval period and was largely complete by the fourteenth century.[8] The antiquity of the place-name is reflected by the fact that the name was regarded as a curiosity due to the absence of trees on the ridge. Woodland management was undertaken to control the type of species that were being cultivated as well as being removed. In some places woodland had become totally depleted, as at Cefn Hirgoed, thus from the thirteenth century woodland appears to have been viewed as a valuable resource that was to be carefully managed. In Haverfordwest burgesses were allowed to take from the lord's Forest of *Nerberd*, 'dead wood for burning and green wood for building', this was to be done under the supervision of the lord's forester.[9] Burgesses of Pembroke were also granted rights within this wood along similar lines to those of Haverfordwest, a provision was also made whereby they could keep pigs in the woods.[10] Wood was useful for a multitude of purposes, as well as for fuel for heating and cooking and building material, wood was also used for shipbuilding and there is reference made to this in the Swansea charter.[11] At Llangibby castle beech trees were felled, topped and

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[8] Walker, M.J.C., Lawler, M & Locock, M. (1997) "Woodland Clearance in Medieval Glamorgan: Pollen Evidence from Cefn Hirgoed," *Arch. Wales* 37, 24

[9] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* Haverfordwest 1189 - 1219, 56

[10] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* Pembroke 1154 - 89, 54

[11] PRO: C53/12/2

squared for repairs to the castle in 1286/7.[12] Timber was also used for furniture and household utensils, charcoal for smelting, tannin for leather working, ashes for dyeing and staves for barrels. As such it seems that woodland could be a profitable resource, a situation that is demonstrated in 1315 after Gilbert Clare had died and the lordship of Glamorgan passed to the king. Edward II, specifically enquired into a sale of woodland near Senghenydd from which profits of *husebote* and *haybote* were being drawn.[13] Charcoal was important in the iron industry as part of the smelting process, as well as in the burning of lime. The abundance of woodland meant that supplies were plentiful. As such, charcoal burning developed into an industry of importance during the Middle Ages, taking place at a range of locations, some with diverse economies.[14]

Areas of designated forests were sometimes given over to be hunting parks for the enjoyment of the Marcher lords. Some hunting parks had been created in north Wales during the late eleventh century, later becoming increasingly common in south Wales during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Forests served other purposes too, with timber from long-established broad leaf trees being a valuable resource that served many purposes. The largest forest in south Wales was created by Bernard de Neufmarche in the lordship of Brecon early in the twelfth century.[15] It covered some fifty square miles of land which accounted for 32,000 of the 40,000 acres of land within the lordship as a whole. It was certainly the largest forest but it was not alone. William Rees has identified over one hundred forests, fifty woods and twenty one deer parks as existing in south Wales by the fourteenth century.[16] Extensive parks

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[12] PRO: SC6/925/18

[13] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1315, 161; see also NLW: Bute MS 37/10

[14] Rees, W. (1924), 114 citing PRO: SC6/926/8; see also Kissock, J.A. & Wright, N. (2001) 143-59

[15] Lloyd, J. (1915) *The Great Forest of Brecknock* (Brecon)

[16] Rees, W. (1923) *The Historical Map of South Wales and the Border in the Fourteenth Century* (Southampton, OS)

were created at Abergavenny and in Gower, where William de Breos surrounded more than five hundred acres of land with a four mile fence.[17] Despite often being perceived as hunting parks comprised of wild animals, the landscape within these parks could often be quite varied, combining a mix of pasture, meadow, woodland, and sometimes arable.

The administration of forests took on a very specific nature as foresters were appointed to manage the resource. Few detailed accounts of the activities of foresters survive for Wales as a whole, nonetheless, those that do provide a some insight into the day to day activities of the foresters. Among these were coppicing and lopping as well as more general felling for repairing houses or *housebote*, creating hedges *heybote* and making agricultural implements *ploughbote*. Suits were sometimes brought against foresters, usually for unauthorised felling.[18] In Carmarthenshire, rents were received from parts of the forest that were farmed out and by 1300 Welshmen were named as foresters there, including Caradog ap Hywel and Gruffudd ap Ieuan.[19] Given the abundance of woodland in south Wales and its importance in daily life, Welshmen were quite likely to have been actively involved in the exploitation of forests as well as woodland from a much earlier date. In the returns of William Rouclyfe, chief forester for Gower in 1337/8, there are both English and Welsh personal names listed; among them are John de Norton, John Coby, William Hogge and John Lang alongside names such as Rolias Rivyd and Tomos ap Eynon.[20]

Certain tree species were used for particular purposes. For example, in the construction of watermills, ash was used to make wheel ladles, whilst elm was also

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[17] Davies, J. (1996), 47

[18] PRO: SC6/1159/1

[19] PRO: SC6/1218/1,2,3

[20] Arundel Castle MS: W1m.3, 4, 5

used in their construction.[21] At Llanelen oak and ash appear to have been used in the charcoal burning process.[22] Wood was also required in the construction of fishing weirs, with elm being used in their construction.[23] In the forest of Senghenydd in 1281, licences were issued to carpenters to take from the forest materials as required to make named items, including; utensils, barrels, bowls, buckets and furniture.[24] These items could then be sold at the weekly market and profit derived from its sale.

As the population increased, there was a greater demand for arable and pastoral farmland. This led to an increase in assarting, the process of removing woodland and wasteland to create farmland. This process proceeded apace in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries throughout much of Wales.[25] The thirteenth century is often viewed as representing the peak of medieval assarting as pressure on the land led to a considerable extension in the area of cultivation. When Henry III seized much of north east Wales in the 1240s, one of the concerns of its inhabitants was that their right to assart should be confirmed.[26] Other areas including uplands and wetlands such as the Gwent levels saw the introduction of schemes in order to create more land suitable for cultivation.[27] Upland areas are more problematic, with the traditional view seeing poorer people moving into these 'marginal' lands as a result of land hunger which was allied to population growth. The evidence reviewed so far suggests

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[21] Linnard, W. (1982) *Welsh Woods and Forests, History and Utilization* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press), 37

[22] Groves, C. (2001) "The Charcoal" in Kissock, J.A. & Wright, N. (2001) "The Excavation of a Charcoal-burning Platform at Llanelen, Gower" *Stud. Celt.* 35, 154

[23] NLW: Bettisfield MS. 1306

[24] *Clark Cartae* III, 847; NLW: Bute MS 37/10

[25] Davies (1996), 47

[26] *Ibid.*, 47

[27] Rippon, S. (1996) *Gwent Levels: The Evolution of a Wetland Landscape* CBA Research Report 105, (York, CBA)

that at certain times some upland areas such as those near Neath and at Senghenydd near Caerphilly could yield higher profits for a lord than rents and other incomes from the immediate town. Although this is not unusual, the fact that there are instances of upland areas returning greater profits is rather interesting. This may have been as a result of the growth in the cloth industry as a consequence of the increased demand for wool. It would be easier to graze sheep on a mountain rather than keep them in the lowlands where good quality, relatively flat land was at a premium for growing crops.

Research into the existence and use of gardens and orchards in south Wales during the study period has been virtually non-existent. This can, in part, be explained by the limitations imposed by the documentary sources. Welsh historians are not blessed with the comparative wealth of information that Dyer was able to draw upon when he investigated orchards and gardens in medieval England.[28] Ministers' accounts sometimes give mention to the existence of a garden, or an orchard and sometimes even both, but overall little detailed information can be extracted, apart from their actual existence. Large gardens often lay near residential centres, often being exclusively used by the local lord or the ecclesiastical authorities. Cardiff's extra mural suburb of Crokkerton had been established on a plot of land that had previously been Earl William of Gloucester's herb garden.[29] Knights' Templar records reveal that there were orchards and gardens and fields amounting to 123 acres which belonged to the order at Llanmadoc in Gower.[30]

8.4 Iron Production and Mineral Resources

In later centuries coal mining was to become the dominant industry of south Wales, closely allied to the production of iron. Pre-industrialisation extraction of iron

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[28] Dyer, C.C. (1994) "Gardens and Orchards in Medieval England" in *Idem. Everyday Life in Medieval England* (London, Hambledon) 115-131

[29] Pugh, T.B. (ed.) (1971) *Glamorgan County History vol. III The Middle Ages*, 342

[30] Lord, E. (2002) 113-4

ore and coal did take place and could be quite profitable in the Middle Ages. A coal mine recorded at *Billewasta* in Gower averaged a net profit of £90 per annum in the fourteenth century.[31] Unfortunately references such as this are rare. Several ore-fields are known in south Wales, with the best known being located to the west of Cardiff at Llanharry.[32] It is here that the 171kg of ore recovered with the Magor Pill medieval wreck is believed to have originated. The quantity of ore recovered is believed to have been a partial shipment, with the actual quantity being transported likely to have been in the region of 684kg. It has been calculated by Redknap and Young that after smelting this amount would have produced approximately 272kg of iron.[33] There is documentary evidence of iron being smelted in the Wye valley as early as 1141.[34] Shortly after, a document relating to Monmouth and dated *c.*1170, grants three forges on the banks of the River Wye to Monmouth Priory granting freedom of the wharf to all those buying and selling iron.[35]

In 1319 Hugh le Despenser the younger, the new lord of Glamorgan, petitioned the king and was successful in obtaining the services of twelve of the king's iron workers from the Forest of Dean, along with twelve lead miners from Devon and a further twelve from Somerset, in order to work in the iron mines of Glamorgan. The Close Roll of that year records that this was to be done at Hugh's expense.[36] This emphasises the role of the local lord in exploiting natural resources for his own needs and potentially for profit, which was a prime motivation of the lord

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[31] Rees, W. (1924) *op. cit.*, 114; PRO: SC6/1202/15

[32] Redknap, R. & Young, T. (1998) "The Iron Industry of South East Wales in the 13th Century" in Nayling, N. (ed.) *The Magor Pill Medieval Wreck* CBA Research Report 115 (York, CBA), 113

[33] *Ibid.*, 113

[34] *Cal. Chart. Roll.* III, 96

[35] Kissack, K.E. (1974) *Medieval Monmouth* (Monmouth, Monmouth Historical Trust) 24, 71

[36] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1319 Ed. II, 127

in taking up their holdings from the king. This request dates from a time when the rural economy was suffering and could represent an act of resultant diversification on the part of Despenser, who for a time enjoyed good relations with the king.

8.5 Fishing and Fisheries

Fish was an important part of the medieval diet, consumed at religious festivals as well as being of nutritional value. Dietary rules imposed by the Church forbade the consumption of meat on the vigils of important festivals, for the six weeks of Lent and on certain days of the week. Hence, vast quantities of fish appear to have been consumed annually during the Middle Ages, with the consumption of fish not restricted to any one social group. This state of affairs reflects the fact that fish was quite cheap as well as being widely available and therefore could be enjoyed by ordinary people.[37] Eating meat on a daily basis may not have been an option for the poorer members of society therefore fish, whether from freshwater or salt-water played a prominent role in the medieval diet. Additionally fish assumed particular importance when crops failed and sea fishing would have been more important in the life of any coastal settlement. It is unsurprising, therefore, to find that townsmen and farmers could and did also turn their hands to fishing both for a living and to supplement their income.[38] Most inland towns were also located near rivers capable of supporting fisheries and by the late fourteenth century there is documentary evidence of Chepstow market supplying estates in Suffolk with fresh salmon[39] and pike reared in Swansea being taken to stock Babworth pond in Nottinghamshire, revealing the long distances fish was being exported.[40] The monastic orders were

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[37] Fox, H.S.A. (2001) 85-7

[38] For the example of Chepstow on the River Wye see Waters, I. (1977) *The Port of Chepstow* (Chepstow Society)

[39] See p.30

[40] *Clark Cartae* no. 1042, 1341 dated July 1376

quick to realise the potential in fishing and Neath Abbey was granted fisheries in the River Tawe by John de Breos early in the thirteenth century.[41] Tewkesbury Abbey was granted rights on the River Taff even earlier at the turn of the twelfth century, it is likely that the abbey sub-let them, preferring to receive income from rents instead.[42]

It seems that rights to fisheries were jealously guarded and suit was brought against John Philip of Kenfig by the Abbot of Margam in November 1365 for infringements in the fishery of Kenfig pool and Afan waters.[43] Meanwhile, Rees ap Griffith Gethyn was excommunicated, due to his infraction of the fisheries in the same month and was accused by the abbot in the county court in Cardiff the following June.[44] The Marcher lords also benefited from charging for fishing rights. In Chepstow 12*s.* were received by the lord to allow 17 boats rights to fish on the River Wye.[45] At Caerleon too, boating rights were charged for use of the River Usk.[46] Weirs designed to trap fish would have been a common site on the rivers of south Wales in the Middle Ages. Additionally, fish traps dating from the twelfth and thirteenth century have been identified along the south Wales coast, notably around Gower and the Severn Estuary Levels.[47] Floodgates that regulated the supply of water to watermills also acted as a convenient fishtrap. Cardiff, Carmarthen and Haverfordwest are listed as having prominent river fisheries and Pembroke,

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[41] *Clark Cartae* no. 479, 477 dated 1231

[42] *Clark Cartae* no. 34, 37 dated 1102

[43] *Clark Cartae* no. 1026, 1312

[44] *Clark Cartae* no. 1027, 1312 dated 11 Nov. 1365 & no. 1028, 1314, 22 June 1366

[45] PRO: SC6/921/23

[46] PRO: SC6/921/5; PRO: SC6/928/21

[47] Kay, Q. & Davies, M. (1993) "A Medieval Fish Weir on the Beach at Whiteford Point, Gower," *Gower* 44, 6-13; Godbold, S & Turner, R.C. (1994) "Medieval Fishtraps in the Severn Estuary" *Med. Arch.* 38, 19-54

Haverfordwest and in particularly Tenby stand out as being major coastal fishing centres, particularly for catches of herring.[48]

Dyer has argued that the consumption of freshwater fish was primarily a reserve for the aristocracy and cites the location and distribution of ponds as evidence. Ponds are frequently encountered in association with high status settlements such as castles, moated sites, monasteries or within the bounds of hunting parks.[49] Leat systems feeding into ponds were sometimes deliberately constructed in order to supply water to specific settlements as at Cillonydd,[50] sometimes to power a mill or simply to regularly supply fresh water. The construction of a pond was a skilled task which often required specialist labour. In the Midlands, Welsh dykers were often brought in specifically due to their expertise.[51]

8.6 Cultivable Land

During the study period the manorial system was largely confined to the lowlands. This is evident when studying the distribution maps of south Wales in the Middle Ages that were compiled by William Rees.[52] Active involvement in the reorganisation of the landscape was witnessed in south east Wales where land was reclaimed on the Gwent Levels and new settlements laid out during the twelfth century.[53] The process of enclosing land by creating hedgerows is usually thought of

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[48] Lewis, E.A. (1903), 150

[49] Dyer, C.C. (1989) "The Consumption of Freshwater Fish in Medieval England" in Aston, M. (ed.) *Medieval Fish, Fisheries and Fishponds* (Oxford, BAR) 182, 27

[50] Weeks, R. (2002) "A post-Dissolution Monastic Site and its Landscape: Cillonydd on Mynydd Maen," *Gw. Loc. Hist.* 92 3-24

[51] Dyer, C.C. (1989) *op. cit.*, 28

[52] Rees, W. (1959) *An Historical Atlas of Wales From the Earliest Times* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press) plate 47

[53] Rippon, S. (1996), 63

as being a post-medieval phenomenon, however it was actively taking place in the Middle Ages across south Wales from Caerleon in the east where 18*s.* 8*d.* was spent on enclosing hedges anew in 1306, as far as Gower in the west and beyond.[54] The rewards could be great, often exceeding income derived from the urban centres, For example, even in the later fourteenth century, Caerphilly was returning £13, 2*s.* 1*d.* for its lord whilst its hinterland - Senghenydd - was much more valuable returning £122, 3*s.* 10*d.* The situation was similar in the Vale of Glamorgan, where Cowbridge was valued at £14, 7*s.* 7*d.* in 1374 but the manor of Llanblethian which surrounded it was valued at £69, 15*s.* 11*d.*[55]

This does not mean that Anglo-Norman influence failed to penetrate into the uplands. The distribution of earthwork castles and religious sites argue against such a suggestion. So too do the remains of settlements now visible as low lying earthworks of house platforms and cultivation terraces which are a common sight on the hillsides of the uplands of Glamorgan and Gwent and are also to be found in Powys and Carmarthenshire. Traditional explanations for such features are usually related to the marginal land hypothesis. This sees population pressure outstripping resources leading to marginal land being brought into cultivation, land which was then abandoned during times of population contraction and economic stability. Increasingly, it seems that the 'margins' were still being cultivated even in periods when population pressure was not an influencing factor. The explanation for this ostensibly lies in the fact that there remained a market for the produce obtained from cultivating these so called 'marginal' lands.

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[54] For 'making hedges' in Caerleon see PRO: SC6/921/7; for Gower: Weeks, R. (1998b) "Bishopston, Gower", *Arch. Wales* 38, 143 - 144; Weeks, R. (1998c) "Oystermouth, Gower", *Arch. Wales* 38, 144 - 145

[55] *Cal. Clo. Roll.* 1374-77, 306

Evidence from cereal prices at weekly markets held across south Wales supports the view that there was an increase in demand for staple crops during the crisis periods. Prices had risen steadily in the twelfth century. By 1316, the year after the rebellion led by Llewelyn Bren, the price of oats rose from 2*s.* to 9*s.*[56] The following year cereal prices more than doubled.[57] These dramatic price rises were influenced by wider events. The period 1315-1322 was characterised by a series of particularly harsh winters and mild summers, conditions that affected not only Britain but much of Europe too.[58] William Rees has highlighted the case of Roath in Cardiff where, in 1316, 17½ acres of hay valued at 3*d.* per acre were swamped by excessive rain.[59] Shortages of crops led to increased demand and greater opportunities for producers to raise a good price for their produce on the open market. A ministers' account from Usk dated 1325 states, 'land assarted in Whitefield of thorns and brambles for having arable there, one man hired to assart a piece of land above the castle for having fallow there and for sowing oats.'[60] Whilst in Caerleon there is reference to assarting a piece of pasture in the marshes near the River Usk.[61] These measures were specifically taken to boost crop production. Producers in south Wales sought to take advantage of this and there is evidence of wheat and other cereals being grown in Llandovery which was sent to Hereford market.[62] As will be seen, however, the shortage of labour led to high labour costs, which in turn reduced profits, leading some producers to reconsider their involvement in cereal cultivation altogether.

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[56] PRO: SC6/1202/7,8,9

[57] PRO: SC6/920/23

[58] Kershaw, I. (1973), 1 - 50

[59] Rees, W. (1924), citing PRO: SC6/1202/7

[60] *Ibid.*; PRO: SC6/928/1

[61] *Ibid.*; PRO: SC6/920/20

[62] PRO: SC6/1165/7

Despite the marginal land hypothesis, the exact nature and more pressingly the dating of many abandoned upland settlements remains little understood. There is little in the way of documentary evidence and archaeological excavations have been relatively few when compared to the number of identified deserted upland settlements which currently runs into several thousand. The recently concluded excavations on Cefn Drum near Pontardulais in the uplands of the lordship of Gower was the first research programme to systematically investigate upland settlement in south Wales since the work of Lady Aileen Fox on Gelligaer Common in the 1930s.[63] Dating evidence from Cefn Drum has, so far, been problematic and the number of finds limited. A range of features have been excavated, including a farmstead complex which is tentatively dated on stylistic grounds to the later Middle Ages.[64]

8.7 Sheep and Cattle

The role of the monastic orders in the development of the wool industry has already been considered. As the Cistercians moved away from direct involvement in sheep rearing in the fourteenth century, the Marcher lords increased their involvement in the wool trade. The wool trade in south Wales had not exclusively been the reserve of the monastic orders prior to this, however, they had exercised a considerable influence on an industrial scale. Gerald of Wales informs us that the Flemish settlers were particularly adept at sheep rearing and very amenable to commerce.[65] Sheep rearing was not as labour intensive as cereal cultivation and therefore costs were not so high. Added to this were the extensive opportunities for upland pasture, therefore, secular involvement in sheep rearing increased during the fourteenth century, with the explicit aim of catering for the markets relinquished by the Cistercians. In the Bohun

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[63] Kissock, J.A. (2000) "Farmsteads of a Presumed Medieval date on Cefn Drum, Gower: An Interim Review", *Stud. Celt.*, 34, 223 - 48; see also Fox, A. (1939) "Early Welsh Homesteads on Gelligaer Common, Glamorgan," *Arch. Camb.* 94, 163-99

[64] *Ibid.*, 248

[65] Brewer, J.S., Dimock, J.F. and Warner, G.F. (eds.) *Gerald of Wales, Opera* VI, 63

lordship of Brecon sheep rearing took place on a large scale. In 1372 3,106 fleeces were sold at market for 5*d.* a fleece yielding a considerable profit. This was by no means an exception, with the average yield in the years 1365-70 being 3,117 fleeces a year.[66]

As was seen in chapters two and three, the Marcher lords were generally infrequent visitors to their Welsh estates, which meant that produce from land farmed on their behalf was not so greatly in demand to serve the lord's household. This, in turn, freed up more of the produce that was grown locally for sale at the weekly markets. This led some lords to appoint overseers to control agricultural activity in their lordships. In essence, these 'farm managers' held considerable power in influencing the types of crop that were to be grown for sale at market. The importance of agricultural endeavour to the economy of Breconshire has already been noted, as it allowed an increased number of markets and fairs to be established during the thirteenth century when compared to other regions of south Wales. Farm overseers were prominent in the lordship of Brecon from early on and continued to be so into the fourteenth century. In the 1370s the overseer of Brecon was receiving £3 6*s.* 8*d.* for supervising crop production within the lordship.[67]

If sheep rearing had been the 'star turn' of the south Wales economy in the thirteenth century then it was the cattle trade and the market for beef that provides the more interesting story of the fourteenth century. In a period marked by economic distress, the cattle market seemed to offer more advantages in terms of livestock trade. The growth experienced in cattle rearing cannot be compared with that of sheep rearing a century earlier, in fact by comparison it was relatively small. Nevertheless, the cattle market was one of the few areas of agricultural endeavour which expanded

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[66] PRO: SC6/1156/18

[67] *Ibid,.*

and became more productive in the fourteenth century. The nature of the cattle trade also differed, as production was aimed at replenishing stocks on estates in England rather than on producing for the local market.[68] Nonetheless growth did take place and the export market in beef was remarkably buoyant. This growth in beef exports stimulated the export market in other produce, as is attested to by a ministers' account from Llandovery dated 1356, which records that along with 70 oxen being taken to London were a variety of locally produced cheeses; the oxen were valued at 5*s.* each.[69] Other accounts show that not only oxen, but pigs, salmon, lampreys, partridges, malt and vinegar were being exported from the lordship of Caerleon and Usk for use in eastern England.[70]

The gathering of crops led to a heavy reliance on paid labour, which seriously compromised the margin for profit. High labour costs are usually cited as the reason for surprisingly low profits for areas that would have otherwise been thought to have been more productive. For example, cereal production in the lordship of Caerleon and Usk in 1339 was returning a rather low £30, whereas nine years previously it had raised £65.[71] Low profit margins and high labour costs, R.R. Davies argues, were particularly acute in the March of south Wales when compared to England during the later fourteenth century.[72] Ultimately these were contributory factors which led to a decline in the influence of Marcher lordship, as lords concentrated their interests elsewhere.

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[68] Davies, R.R. (1978)

[69] PRO: SC6/1218/6

[70] PRO: E101/93/6

[71] PRO: SC11/799/1; See also Davies, R.R. (1978) 113

[72] *Ibid.*, 114

Early on during his reign, Edward III fixed staples on wool at Cardiff, Carmarthen and Shrewsbury in order to levy customs on the surrounding district. This status was taken away from Cardiff in 1332, when staples were ordered to be held in the king's towns only. Shrewsbury remained the chief wool market for mid Wales, as did Carmarthen for the south. In 1353 Carmarthen became the sole staple for Wales which according to Lewis was more convenient to foreign traders and was subsequently not a success, because merchants from the north and east of Wales found it a great inconvenience to have to travel to Carmarthen in order to trade with markets just over the border.

8.8 Milling: corn mills and fulling mills

Once corn had been harvested to be used it had to be ground. Freshly clipped wool also had to be treated and specific types of mill were established in order to do this. As, has been seen, the exploitation of natural resources is often attested to archaeologically in the form of mines, quarries, earthworks, field patterns, and features such as ponds. However they are not always mentioned in the documentary evidence. The opposite is sometimes true as documents occasionally record the existence of facilities such as a mill, but where the exact location of that mill can no longer be seen. This is true in the lordship of Trelech, where five mills are mentioned in an inquisition dating from 1314,[73] yet only one of them can be identified on the ground. Even this mill, at Trelech grange, may not actually be one of the mills that are referred to, as it is on a monastic estate and so may not have been included in the inquisition.[74] Nevertheless, there are instances where archaeological and historical evidence do come together in demonstrating the exploitation of natural resources. For example, a mill is recorded as being in operation at Parc le Breos in Gower in 1399

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[73] PRO: SC6/1202/15

[74] Burton, A.M., Heath, D. & Williams, D.H. (2001) *The Story of Trelleck Grange* (Trelleck, Privately Printed), 22

and can still be seen today.[75] Although many recorded mills remain un-located, the remains of an abandoned medieval fulling mill still exist and can be seen at Monkswood near Usk.

Mills were a common feature of medieval towns, or more usually their immediate hinterlands. An Inquisition of 28 July 1368 records that Abergavenny possessed four watermills let at farm for £13 yearly, a fulling mill let at farm for 20*s*. yearly. A fulling mill at nearby Michaelston was less profitable by comparison with just 13*s* 4*d* being received annually.[76] Caerleon by contrast is only recorded as having possessed one fulling mill.[77] In west Wales, Kidwelly is recorded as possessing eight watermills and a fulling mill, whereas in the lordship of Carnewalthan, which contained the market town of Llanelli, there were five watermills and three fulling mills.[78] The monastic orders owned nearly ninety watermills in Wales as a whole during the Middle Ages. The watermills were used for grinding corn, oats and other staples and were by far the most common type of mill found on monastic estates in south Wales between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. In secular society, meanwhile, the fulling mill was more dominant. Cloth manufacture from fulling mills was undertaken on a commercial basis during the thirteenth century within the lordships that fell within the bounds of the later Glamorgan, Gwent and Carmarthenshire.[79] The impetus for growth in the cloth industry was largely secular, Tintern Abbey and Carmarthen Priory were the only exceptions in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[80] In 1316 thirteen rolls of

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[75] PRO: SC6/1202/15

[76] *Cal. IPM* 12 no. 226, 201

[77] *Cal. IPM* 12 no. 321, 321

[78] *Cal. IPM* 12 , 106

[79] Jack, R.I. (1980-1) "The Cloth Industry in Medieval Wales" *Welsh Hist. Rev.* 10, 447-50

[80] Jack, R.I. (1981) "Fulling Mills in Wales and the March before 1547," *Arch. Camb.* 130, 86

canvas were purchased for an unspecified windmill in Glamorgan costing 3*s* 3*d*.[81] Windmills were more common on the coastal lowlands of Glamorgan and Pembrokeshire, yet even then they remained comparatively rare.

The construction of a mill required a conscious effort of capital investment. Mills were a particular focus for resentment amongst the Welsh as symbols of lordly oppression throughout the study period, and were widely attacked in the risings of Llewelyn Bren and, later, Owain Glyndŵr. Ordinary people were compelled to use them and paid the lord for the privilege of doing so, but such compulsion did not apply to all members of society. Cardiff burgesses were free to build dove towers, horse mills and hand mills.[82] By the fourteenth century, the construction and maintenance of mills had become uneconomic in some regions, largely due to the low prices that cereals were fetching, and the high labour costs in general. This led to what has been termed a 'crisis' in milling.[83] However, recent research has shown that in parts of south Wales this may not have been the case. In Gower, Kissock has found that new mills were being built in the late fourteenth century, possibly as an opportunist measure to take advantage of land that was being brought into cultivation, as occurred at Oystermouth.[84] Kissock suggests that the 'real crisis' in milling may have been brought about by the rebellion of Owain Glyndŵr in 1400.[85]

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[81] PRO: SC6/1202/9

[82] *Brit. Bor. Chart.* 1147 - 83 Cardiff, 96

[83] Kissock, J.A. (2002) "The Ecclesiastical and Demesne Mills of Gower: A Fourteenth Century Perspective", *Melin: Journal of the Welsh Mills Society* 18, 3

[84] *Ibid*; Weeks, R. (1998c) "Oystermouth, Gower", *Arch. Wales* 38, 144 - 145

[85] Kissock, J.A. (2002), 13

8.9 The Type of Goods Traded at Market

A murage grant to the borough of Crickhowell issued in 1281 gives some indication of the types of goods passing through the weekly markets and annual fairs in the town. Among the items listed are the usual staple crops of corn, wheat and oats and various types of livestock, including sheep, pigs, hens, horses and oxen, alongside more luxurious items including fine silks with gold finishing, linen, Irish cloth and French wine. Raw materials featured on the list include *alum* and *copperas*, both natural minerals involved in the dyeing process as well as iron and lead. Interestingly, ½*d.* was levied for every thousand of herring brought into the town, compared to ¼*d.* for each individual salmon. Hardware brought into the town to be traded included millstones, brewing cauldrons, horseshoes, cart-clouts and various types of nails for specific purposes - including for roofing tiles and for wheel rims.[86]

The import, sale and distribution of wine throughout south Wales during the study period is attested to in both the historical and the archaeological record. As early as 1216, boats operated by Cardiff burgesses were involved in shipping wine to Ireland.[87] There is also good evidence that wine was being regularly imported by boat to Monmouth from at least the 1240s.[88] Wine-carrying vessels from the Saintonge region were delivering casks of wine by boat to many coastal and riverine ports. They also brought with them ceramic jugs or 'decanters' in which to serve the wine, with sherds of Saintonge pottery being found widely in medieval deposits at sites across south Wales. Wine was usually transported in barrels and served in these jugs rather than being transported in them, as this ran the risk of increased breakages. As such it could be implied that those ports listed were major importers of wine. In the case of Swansea, its 1306 charter held a provision whereby the lord would benefit from every

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[86] *Cal. Pat Roll.* 1281-92 2-3

[87] James, M.K. (1971) *Studies in The Medieval Wine Trade* (Oxford, Clarendon Press)

[88] *Calendar of Liberate Rolls* 1240 - 45, 65

ship bringing more than thirty *tunnes* of wine into the town from foreign parts.[89] M.K. James has examined the records of central government relating to the wine trade, while unfortunately there is little relating to the March of south Wales, there are numerous references to castles being supplied with barrels of wine from France. Wine was also being produced in south Wales, as is attested to by a reference to a vineyard in Magor in 1327 which was valued at 2*s*.[90]

Beer making is less well evidenced, but the monasteries were actively engaged in brewing ale, what it is not clear is whether this was for domestic use or to sell at market. Tintern was known for its quality beer,[91] whilst Margam's beer was noted for its high alcohol content.[92] Brewing was likely to have been much more widespread, although there is little to indicate the extent to which it was undertaken for commercial purposes or otherwise.

The study of ceramic distributions is fraught with problems when trying to identify trading patterns and trade in wine in particular, not least because wine was usually transported in barrels. Evans has discussed some of the problems, noting how post-medieval evidence on the chains of sales and the re-sale and the redistribution of imported pottery highlights the dangers of deducing medieval trade routes by mapping find spots and then linking them to their originating kiln.[93] He also points out that there are at least eight types of pottery with distinguishing features all being loosely termed as 'Saintonge ware' in the British Isles.[94] The Papazian and Campbell

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[89] *Brit. Bor. Chart* 1306, 332

[90] PRO: C135/2/18

[91] PRO: E/315/92/97

[92] *Clark Cartae* III no. 1132

[93] Evans, D.H. (1983) "Ceramics and Trade: A Critique", *Med. Lat. Pot. Wales* 6, 78

[94] *Ibid.*, 81

report, into ceramics and roof tiles from Wales, emphasised that ceramic distributions only reflect the current state of research and most of this has been undertaken in Glamorgan and Gwent.[95] The discovery of ceramic finds - predominantly French and Iberian wares - along the coast, notably along the Severn Estuary Levels, has had to be treated with caution as they may not have been imported by trading activity but instead may have been used by sailors on boats and discarded overboard, sometime after to be washed up on south Wales beaches. More reliable, due to the context within which they were found, are a range of sherds from north Devon, which were uncovered at Barry along with some sherds suspected to have originated in Somerset.[96] In the deserted village of Pennard in south Gower some locally produced wares were found along with a highly decorated jug of continental origin, all of which came from a medieval context.[97]

8.10 Conclusion

This chapter has drawn together the available information relating to the use of natural resources and the exploitation of the raw materials they provided. In turn these raw materials could be adapted through processes like milling, and smelting, in order to produce a variety of goods. In the case studies used some general themes have been identified. Firstly woodland was, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, an abundant natural resource, although by the thirteenth century it seems that it was a resource that had been widely exploited and was in danger of depletion in some of the more southerly lordships. This reflects the diversity that woodland offered as a valuable resource. Examples were cited including the keeping of pigs in forests and the management of woodland for smelting charcoal in the iron-making process, a

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[95] Papazian, C.& Campbell, E. (1992) "Medieval Pottery and Roof Tiles in Wales AD 1100 - 1600", *Med. Lat. Pot. Wales* 13, 6

[96] Dowdell, G. & Thomas, H.J. (1980) "Some Evidence for the Seaborne Carriage of Medieval and Later Pottery in the Bristol Channel", *Med. Lat. Pot. Wales* 3, 7

[97] Moorhouse, S. (1985) "The Ceramic Contents of a Thirteenth Century Timber Building Destroyed by Fire at Pennard, Gower", *Med. Lat. Pot. Wales* 8, 5

prolific activity in the thirteenth century. It was at this time that specific measures were taken in order to manage the resource and direct cultivation for specific needs, as certain types of wood was being used for specific purposes. It has also been suggested that the greatest inhibitor on the exploitation and utilisation of natural resources was the social and political unrest that manifested itself in open rebellion. This chapter has also shown that in addition to goods being made locally, items were also imported. Usually this was done directly by boat in order to supply castles.

This chapter has provided additional information in answering Beresford's third question. It has shown that ordinary people usually traded the produce of the countryside at market and that this was usually better traded locally. It has also shown, as in the case at Crickhowell, that a wide range of items could be purchased at local markets and a special journey to one of the larger urban centres was not always necessary in order to obtain luxury items. Perhaps, this is to be expected, however, as it appears that merchants and traders operated on circuits that took in both large commercial centres as will as visiting smaller rural markets.

Chapter Nine
Conclusions

This research project was undertaken in order to fill a gap in Welsh medieval studies. Prior to this investigation there had been no comprehensive study of the evidence for transport and trade in south Wales during the post-Conquest period. Out of necessity, due to the paucity of surviving documentary evidence, this thesis has a wide chronological and geographical range. The thesis began by establishing the background and reviewing earlier research that had been undertaken into transport and trade in south Wales. It then proceeded to use primary source material which was compared to the background of existing knowledge.

In the period following the Norman Conquest, a system was imposed on the south Wales landscape that was radically different to that which existed previously. The Normans are often associated as bringing a landscape 'package' to south Wales consisting of castles, towns and villages, although earlier research has shown that some of these elements already existed. There is evidence for pre-Conquest villages in Pembrokeshire, and estate systems similar to those identified from the Welsh law books in north Wales appear to have also existed in south Wales.[1] Formal markets and fairs were, however, a new introduction, as settlement arrangements prior to the Conquest were conceived in terms of reciprocity between the estate centre and the country. Nonetheless, to assume that little or no trade had been taking place by the Welsh prior to the Conquest is a mistake.

In pre-Conquest south Wales land and kinship had formed the basis of communities which extended beyond the geographical boundaries that sometimes

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[1] See Kissock, J.A (1997), 132; Kissock, J.A. (1991c) 31 - 46

separated them.[2] Networks of trade and exchange existed without the need for an urban system. Yet it would be unwise to suggest that there were no permanent trading centres in the pre-Conquest period. Ports such as Llantwit, which was home to a substantial pre-Conquest ecclesiastical community, would have proven a convenient stopping point for merchants operating in the Severn estuary. Equally, the numerous landing places afforded by the natural bays along the coastline would have served just as well. Unfortunately, detailed evidence for such activity is lacking both in the pre- and post-Conquest periods due to the dearth of extant sources.

In this concluding section of the discourse the overall project will be considered in terms of its limitations and its achievements. It will also put forward answers to the questions posed by Maurice Beresford based on the findings of the previous chapters. Some further avenues for future exploration will be summarised before concluding the overall study.

9.1 Limitations of the Study

Through necessity, this project has utilised a wide range of source material due to the fact that the student of the medieval history of south Wales is thwarted by the lack of surviving, quality source material. This prevents the type of detailed source specific analysis that is possible in some regions of England, for example Glasscock's study of the 1334 Lay Subsidy, from taking place in a south Wales context.[3] Therefore more holistic, inter-disciplinary investigations, like the present work, offer the best opportunity to work around such problems. Much of the surviving documentation comes from the fourteenth century, when many smaller markets had ceased to be held. As was seen, in 1308 many of the rights of smaller markets were

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[2] Jones, G.R.J. (1960) "The Pattern of Settlement on the Welsh Border", *Agri. Hist. Rev.* 8, 66 - 81

[3] Glasscock, R.E. (1975) *The Lay Subsidy of 1334* (London, British Academy)

taken away, but most of the comprehensive surveys, notably Gilbert de Clare's inquisition *c.*1315, come from after this date. One of the main sources used, ministers' accounts, present a very one-sided view of medieval trade. They reveal how lords sought to make profits rather than provide a picture of trade in general.[4]

One of the biggest questions that hangs over the chapters which detail the markets and fairs concerns chronology and the extent to which the markets and fairs listed were operating contemporaneously with each other. Indeed, the date of origin of most of the settlements, let alone the markets that were held within them, is obscure. Most of the details of medieval markets and fairs come from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, yet many of them were likely to have been operating since the early twelfth century. In south west Wales the origin of several settlements can be traced to the first two decades of that century, however, in south east Wales the situation is less clear. For example, the earliest reference to a settlement at Grosmont is from 1250, with the market being mentioned in a source more than one hundred years later in 1362. However, the admittedly limited archaeological research in the old town has revealed sherds of pottery dating from the early twelfth century and there is every possibility that Grosmont and its neighbouring settlements in Gwent date from this time.[5]

How long markets and fairs in any given location existed, and their level of success, can only be determined with certainty in a few cases, although long term trends could be identified, with some of the more successful market places thriving well into the post-medieval period. There are some instances where the establishment of a weekly market can be firmly placed, as in the case of Caerphilly where the castle

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[4] Bailey, M. (1999) "Trade and Towns in Medieval England: New Insights from Familiar Sources", *The Local Historian*, 29, 4, 210

[5] The Cotswold ware pottery was found in an evaluation trench at Town Farm and was probably deposited during the manuring of fields in the Middle Ages, see Clarke, S. & Bray, J. (2000) "Grosmont, Town Farm," *Arch. Wales* 40, 109

was founded in 1268 and the town subsequently developed in support of it. A market was in existence at Llandaff in 1205, but it is not known for how long it operated or how successful it was before ceasing to exist.

In some instances market grants occurred in conjunction with the foundation of a settlement, as occurred at Llawhaden, nevertheless the granting of a market was no guarantee that a weekly market would ever actually be held. Alternatively, there are examples of locations which held markets for some years before the weekly event became the subject of a formal grant from the king. Therefore, ascertaining whether all the markets in a given area operated contemporaneously with each is other is difficult to determine. Yet, with the clearly defined trading sequence that was identified in the Gwent area, there is a strong possibility that most of the markets there operated at the same time with a date range of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries providing the best likelihood.

9.2 Summarising the Thesis

This thesis has systematically examined the role of: (i) the players, (ii) the places, and (iii) the process on the development of transport and trade. Individual chapters considered the respective roles of the main 'players' on the transporting and trading scene. These were: the Marcher lords, the monasteries and the Crown. The two chapters dealing with lordship also considered the size of the settlements concerned at key periods and sought to establish whether any clear trading patterns existed. It was shown that trading circuits did, indeed, exist with very clear patterns existing along and across the border with England, in Gwent, Breconshire and Glamorgan. A less obvious pattern existed in Pembrokeshire and southern Carmarthenshire and it was proposed that this may have been because overland routes were not the prime consideration here, especially in Pembrokeshire. In terms of the processes the system of linkages was examined along with the temporal and spatial distribution of markets and fairs.

The author feels that this thesis has made a contribution in two ways; it has provided an up-to-date study of medieval markets and fairs and the overall transport and trading system in south Wales during the post-Conquest period and it has provided an historico-geographical regional study of the type that has been advocated by many leading scholars of medieval social and economic history.[6]

When undertaking preparatory reading into the state of knowledge of transport and trade in south Wales during the Middle Ages it became apparent that there was a substantial gap in knowledge. In terms of recent research, there was little beyond site specific studies and the background information that accompanied them. When English regional studies cited comparable Welsh evidence it was from work undertaken prior to the first-world-war, much of it dating to the first decade of the twentieth century with the work of E.A. Lewis and O.S. Watkins.[7] P.T.H. Unwin, in his section on 'Towns and Trade, 1066-1500' in Dodgshon and Butlin's *An Historical Geography of England and Wales*, relied heavily on E.A. Lewis and O.S. Watkins for his Welsh information. More recently in the sections dealing with Wales in the *Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (2000) the most frequently cited sources relating to the south Wales economy were Beresford (1967), Griffiths (1978) and Soulsby (1983), along with the addition of the more recent monograph on landscape archaeology, edited by Edwards (1997).[8] This state of affairs has meant that an up-to-date study dealing specifically with transport and trade has been sorely needed. This research project has sought to address that need, by providing a comprehensive review of the system of transport and trade in south Wales between 1100 and 1400.

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[6] Notably Hatcher, J. (1969) 'A Diversified Economy: Later Medieval Cornwall', *Ec. Hist. Rev.* 2nd series,208; see also chapter 1

[7] Unwin, P.T.H. (1978) "Towns and Trade 1066 - 1500" in Dodgshon, R.A. & Butlin, R.A. (eds.) *An Historical Geography of England and Wales*

[8] Beresford (1967), Griffiths (1978), Soulsby (1983) and Edwards (1997)

In the study of the road system, this research project has established a basic principle that, if a routeway directly links two settlements with contemporary histories, then there is a strong possibility that the routeway itself shares a substantial part of that history, unless it can be proven otherwise. This principle was then employed along with a regressive study of maps and selected fieldwork to advance a plan of the road system of south Wales as it was likely to have appeared and developed between 1100 and 1400. The development and, importantly, the use of the road system went hand in hand with the creation and expansion of trading centres. It has been argued that the basis of the road system that can be seen today - prior to the construction of motorways and dual carriageways - emerged during this period, adding greater detail and coverage to the two main routes of Roman origin to the north and south of the valleys. These two routes, as the Romans discovered, allowed the opening up of the valleys and the exploitation of the resources to be found therein.

9.3 Answering Beresford's Questions

In his pioneering work *New Towns of the Middle Ages*, Professor Maurice Beresford posed a series of questions, relating to transport and trade, that he urged Welsh medieval historians to consider.[9] Given the nature of this research project it is now time to answer those questions. This section will look at Beresford's questions and then, based on information drawn from the main body of the thesis, attempt to provide answers. Specifically Professor Beresford asked:

(i) Was the proliferation of market towns in Wales a consequence of inefficient transport?

To set about answering this question two objectives were identified:

(a) to find out, where and when markets were being held

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[9] Beresford (1967), 347

(b) to examine the evidence for trading systems and discover whether periodic markets existed

The trader model of periodic market allows supply and demand to be concentrated in time and place. This is, in part, because transport costs are high and it is easier for travelling merchants to move into areas where produce is being cultivated and reared, thereby minimising the transport costs for the producers.

It was found that the proliferation of market places was largely due to inefficient transport, but other factors were considered, notably the high number of lordships. Hence, it was thought that each lordship would want its own commercial centre. However, there are numerous instances where several commercial centres developed within individual lordships, each competing with the other. Consequently this line of thought was rejected and it was concluded that the proliferation of market towns did indeed come about as a result of inefficient transport.

In 1999 the Centre for Metropolitan History of the Institute of Historical Research commenced a research project to identify and provide a gazetteer of markets and fairs in England and Wales during the Middle Ages. This research, undertaken by Dr. Samantha Letters, involved a review of secondary literature and a study of published calendared accounts. The results for Wales were published on-line in April 2002.[10] Overall, the information for south Wales is drawn mainly from the published work of Beresford, Soulsby and R.A. Griffiths, with additions from the calendared accounts.[11] This means that the picture presented is far from accurate and this becomes apparent when comparing it to the information featured in the tables in chapters two and three, a great deal of which is drawn from unpublished material.

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[10] http://ihr.sas.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html

[11] Dr. S. Letters, *personal correspondence*

Curiously, the on-line gazetteer provides little information for Usk, despite the full details for the town appearing alongside those for Caerleon in 1368 in the published Charter Rolls.[12]

(ii) Did the poor quality of inland transport slow down the movement of traffic?

No, not in the lowland coastal plains of Gwent, Glamorgan and Pembrokeshire, but in the uplands and interior, it would have done. Chapter four established the main routeways in operation in south Wales during the study period and discovered that the major routes were in the lowlands. These lowland routes were connected to a myriad of routes that descended on them from the uplands. It was revealed that the two main routeways - based on the alignment of Roman roads - allowed the free movement of traffic, but away from these routes things were different. The transport costs for rural producers going to market were high; this was demonstrated in chapter two. It was not until the post medieval period that serious complaints were being made about the state of the roads themselves, suggesting that in the Middle Ages they were in a fair state of preservation.

(iii) Did it also shorten the journey that countrymen were able to make to market?

Trading networks could, and did, stretch widely. Despite this, for ordinary people - countrymen, as Beresford describes them - the high transport costs may have been too prohibitive to travel great distances to market. So the poor quality of inland transport may have shortened the journey people were able to make to market. The hypothesis that individuals would only travel to a market and back within one day is, nonetheless, untenable. Distances cited are often anywhere between five and eight miles, but there was nothing to stop people resting overnight and moving on the next

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[12] *Cal. IPM* 12, no 321, this source is cited in the IHR gazetteer entry for Caerleon

day. The method of transport is also a consideration, whether on foot, on horseback or by cart if overland routes were used. Additionally, moving animals would slow down a journey, and there would be the additional problem of where to keep live animals overnight, as well as the danger of leaving produce unattended. One interesting question, that there is not enough evidence to propose an answer for, is whether ordinary people were compelled to use a market within their own lordship, even if it meant ignoring a market that was geographically closer to them. Being able to answer this question would make answering Beresford's question a lot easier.

(iv) Did a host of small trading centres exist due to the negative effect of high transport costs?

Yes, in Pembrokeshire the settlements that could easily be reached by boat appear to have flourished at the expense of those that were only served by overland routes. Water-borne transport was significantly cheaper than land transport, as was demonstrated in chapter five. In the Vale of Glamorgan income from tolls from ports along the coast were directed towards the nearest borough. It seems that the host of landing places along the south Wales coast were utilised out of convenience and could indeed have existed due to other, negative, effects because travelling further to other, in-land, locations may have been deemed un-viable by some merchants.

(v) Did the poor quality of local transport and the difficulties of navigation along the coast prevent any single port from dominating the trade of the region?

The difficulties appear to be not so much about moving along the coast as the difficulties and cost of penetrating inland by way of rivers. Also perhaps there was an unwillingness among foreign merchants to venture too far inland due to the unstable political situation. In Beresford's terms, London had the Thames as the major routeway that facilitated its growth. Campbell and Power have shown that river

navigation along it to the trading port of London was vitally important for corn producers of the Thames valley in the Middle Ages.[13] Neither the Taff nor the Tawe were navigable as far, nor could they draw on such agriculturally rich resources as the Thames valley in order to allow Cardiff or Swansea to develop to the same extent. The Bristol Channel and the Severn Estuary allowed sea going vessels access to a multitude of ports and navigable rivers, for example, the Wye as far as Hereford. Rather than concentrating trade in a few locations, trading activity could be spread widely on both sides of the Channel and up the River Severn. Therefore it can be said it was the poor quality of transport, the difficulties of navigation and additionally, the absence of a large productive hinterland that prevented any one location from dominating the region.

In the post-Conquest period the Roman road system would have been over a thousand years old. Despite this, the fact that the main system of Roman roads was in use during the Middle Ages seems beyond doubt. Also without question is the influence that the Roman infrastructure had on the siting of the Norman towns, as there is clearly an element of continuity in the siting of Norman towns on Roman precursors. As was seen in chapter 2, even in instances where stretches of Roman road were badly cut up, holloways would often form alongside them as travellers followed the alignment of the Roman route.

Beresford's questions originated from the high density of boroughs compared to the low population levels. He had initially speculated that the situation came about as a result of the military conquest, but reasoned that this situation was not present in Devon and Cornwall where a similar situation existed. The introductory chapter outlined this debate in more detail; where the hypothesis of Dyer - that the situation

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[13] Campbell, B.M.S.& Power, J.P. (1989) "Mapping the Agricultural Geography of Medieval England", *J. Hist. Geog.* 15, 1, 24-39

existed because Wales and the west needed an artificial stimulus to trade that the east had not needed - was discussed. It also covered the view of Kowaleski who, based on research in the south west of England, proposed that this was one of several factors, the others being the broad range of regional specialisations and the difficulties of inland transport.[14]

9.4 Further Avenues for Exploration

In some respects the end of this thesis is only the beginning. In any research project that involves the consideration of a wide range of source material issues are raised that cannot be properly explored within the tight time frame of three years. In this respect, the first area that the present author proposes for further study would be the proliferation of markets and fairs that occurred in the post-medieval period. The research for this thesis did not extend beyond 1400 yet the approach of regressive analysis employed throughout this project revealed that the late fifteenth century saw new additional markets and fairs being established at numerous locations. Additionally, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries many established market days in traditional locations appear to have changed. An examination of these new foundations, and the reasons behind the changes in other places, could provide an interesting study. The scope is great and the documentary evidence for these later periods, more plentiful, especially in regard to variations within the region and the success or otherwise of these new ventures. This author would tentatively suggest that the new markets and fairs that came into existence did so, certainly in the late fifteenth century, as a result of attempts to boost the economy against the backdrop of an ineffectual administrative structure, a structure which in the Middle Ages the Marcher lords provided. It could well have been the case that some of the fifteenth century market foundations existed in name only. This hypothesis needs to be refined and tested.

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[14] See chapter one

Secondly, there is tremendous scope for the consideration of monastic grange estates, including their location, chronology of establishment, size, shape, land use and distribution. Several site specific investigations have been undertaken, notably at Monknash, Walterston and Merthyrgeryn.[15] The present study has added Llantarnam Abbey's grange at Cillonydd to the list of sites considered.[16] As yet, no comprehensive, comparative survey of granges has been carried out and with the majority of south Wales estates being established between 1132 and 1215, therefore making them 'tithe free,' the scope is considerable. The church was a major landowner which means there are large swathes of tithe free land in south Wales.

Finally, there is considerable scope for both the local landscape historian and the field archaeologist. Walking the myriad of minor routeways, that out of practicality could not be included here, can offer excellent insights into their reason for being and help their dating to be refined. The case study of the routeways at Cillonydd has shown this.[17] There are rarely definitive answers. This has been most aptly demonstrated by the short stretch of Roman road between Usk and Caerleon. Its route over Llanhennock ridge being fairly certain, but upon leaving Usk, there are at least four differing interpretations over its precise alignment.[18] The only way of resolving the issue would be a programme of targeted research excavation with resolving this issue in mind. The chances of such excavations being carried out,

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[15] For Monknash: Robinson, D.M. (1981/2) 46-8; Merthyrgeryn: Parkes, L.N. & Webster, P.V. (1974); and Walterston: Toft, L.A. (1996) "Walterston," *Gower* 47, 55-62

[16] Also in Weeks, R. (2002) "A Post-Dissolution Monastic Site and its Landscape: Cillonydd on Mynydd Maen," *Gw. Loc. Hist.* 92, 3-24

[17] See Appendix two

[18] W.H. Manning, who conducted excavations in Roman Usk, disagreed with the alignment chosen by Margary (1967), see Manning, W.H. (1989*) Report on the Excavations at Usk, 1965-76: The Fortress Excavations 1972-4* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press). Other interpretations have been put forward by O'Dwyer (1923) and the OS field surveyors (RCAHMW NMR).

however, are negligible as there remain many other questions in various disciplines that need to be resolved. One reason for optimism, in archaeological terms, are the results of excavations in former market settlements, like Trelech and Newport in Pembrokeshire, where artefacts can help refine the dating as to when sites were occupied and give an indication of the prosperity of the specific location.

9.5 Concluding Statement

Following the devastation of the Glyndŵr rebellion, the decline in economic fortunes that lasted for centuries was as much to do with a lack of a strong influence by the Marcher lords. As was seen in chapter two this becomes apparent when in later centuries conditions were otherwise ripe for growth but it did not take place, largely because of the absence of a strong administrative structure, that previously the Marcher lords had provided. The Conquest had provided the impetus for growth and as Rhys A. Jones has argued, using Gwent as his example, territorial control and the creation of stable boundaries was only achieved in the thirteenth century, this allowed the more effective and efficient exploitation of land as society became governed by what he refers to as 'mature state institutions'.[19]

Overall, a model has been described as to how initially autonomous open country settlements and farmsteads were integrated into a regional network. A network that operated within and between lordships, as rural commodity producers and consumers grew increasingly dependent on the retail goods and services found in the market towns. For their part, the market towns were often objects of resentment from the Welsh and so the transition was not simple or straightforward. It is the events related to this process that have drawn the attention of many scholars enquiring into the history of post-Conquest south Wales. In 1100, south Wales as a landscape

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[19] Jones, R. (1999) "Mann and Men in the Medieval State: The Geographies of power in the Middle Ages", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, NS 24, 73-5

was devoid of towns, with trade taking place through the open country. The creation of the Marcher lordships imposed a new administrative system and led, in some places, to the dislocation of the indigenous population. The population grew as new settlers were introduced and rural settlement intensified, so much so that, by 1300, south Wales had achieved a level of prosperity unprecedented in its history. It was not to last. Population pressure had driven families to the margins of cultivable land. The imbalance between livestock husbandry and arable risked the danger of soil exhaustion, although two leading authorities differ on the influence of such an imbalance in Wales, which was being keenly felt in England *c.*1300. John Davies saw the imbalance as a real danger at the turn of the fourteenth century, whilst R.R. Davies argues that it was less of a threat, because Wales possessed few areas of agriculturally rich lowlands.[20] However, disease such as the sheep scab epidemic of the 1280s and the agricultural crises which affected much of Europe between 1315 and 1322 dealt a severe blow leading to famine. Climatic change was also a key ingredient, crops failed as the weather fluctuated and the sea level rose in the fourteenth century, leading to the encroachment of sand on the coastal plains. Political and social unrest throughout the study period, notably the revolts of Llewelyn ap Gruffud in 1214, Rhys ap Maredudd in 1295 and Llewelyn Bren in 1316, caused the south Wales economy to falter repeatedly. Outbreaks of the plague in the middle, and again towards the end, of the fourteenth century greatly reduced the population. The culmination in this series of events was the Glyndŵr rebellion which dealt the final, fatal blow. Many commercial settlements were attacked, including some that were not directly touched by the earlier ravages. By 1400 a process had begun, and which culminated by 1410, with the very dependency that had been built in the preceding three hundred years - and which had reached its peak in the

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[20] Davies, J. (1996) *The Making of Wales*, 55; Davies, R.R. (1987) *The Age of Conquest*, 140; it may simply be a case of perspective, the south Wales based professor (J. Davies) is more used to seeing lowland landscapes than his north Wales counter-part (R.R. Davies).

thirteenth century - on the transport and trading network of market towns and rural producers and consumers being shattered sending the economy into long term decline.

The Anglo-Norman colonisation of south Wales and the creation of the Marches was an exercise in opportunism as economic development followed military conquest. Studies of the medieval history of south Wales have for too long concentrated on the 'soap opera' history of the elite, of the warfare and political intrigues without actually paying attention to why the Marcher lords were in south Wales, their *raison d'être*, the real quest, was for wealth, status and power. Too often south Wales in the post-Conquest period is viewed as simply being a 'militarised zone'. This neglects the fact that whilst south Wales was a melting pot of political unrest everyday life still carried on. Ordinary people continued to act as both producers and consumers, attending markets and fairs and travelling on foot, by cart or by boat when they did so.

Appendix One: A Gazetteer of Medieval Roads in South Wales

This compilation is by no means an exhaustive survey of every single route likely to date from the Middle Ages. Instead it offers an outline of the principal routeways between market settlements. As noted earlier in this thesis there will always be arguments over precise alignments at a local level. This gazetteer offers my interpretation of the main routes that were being used. It cannot hope to be comprehensive in terms of covering every single holloway, instead it presents the most likely alignments. It has been noted how a multiplicity of minor tracks converge on certain settlements. The myriad of holloways leading to Brecon provide a good example. This gazetteer only details the main routes that were in use, the equivalent of medieval 'A' roads.

Map 4.7 shows sixty one sections of routeway in south Wales. A notable omission are the numerous routeways leading from the valleys to the vale of Glamorgan and the Gwent Levels, these are represented in 4.8.

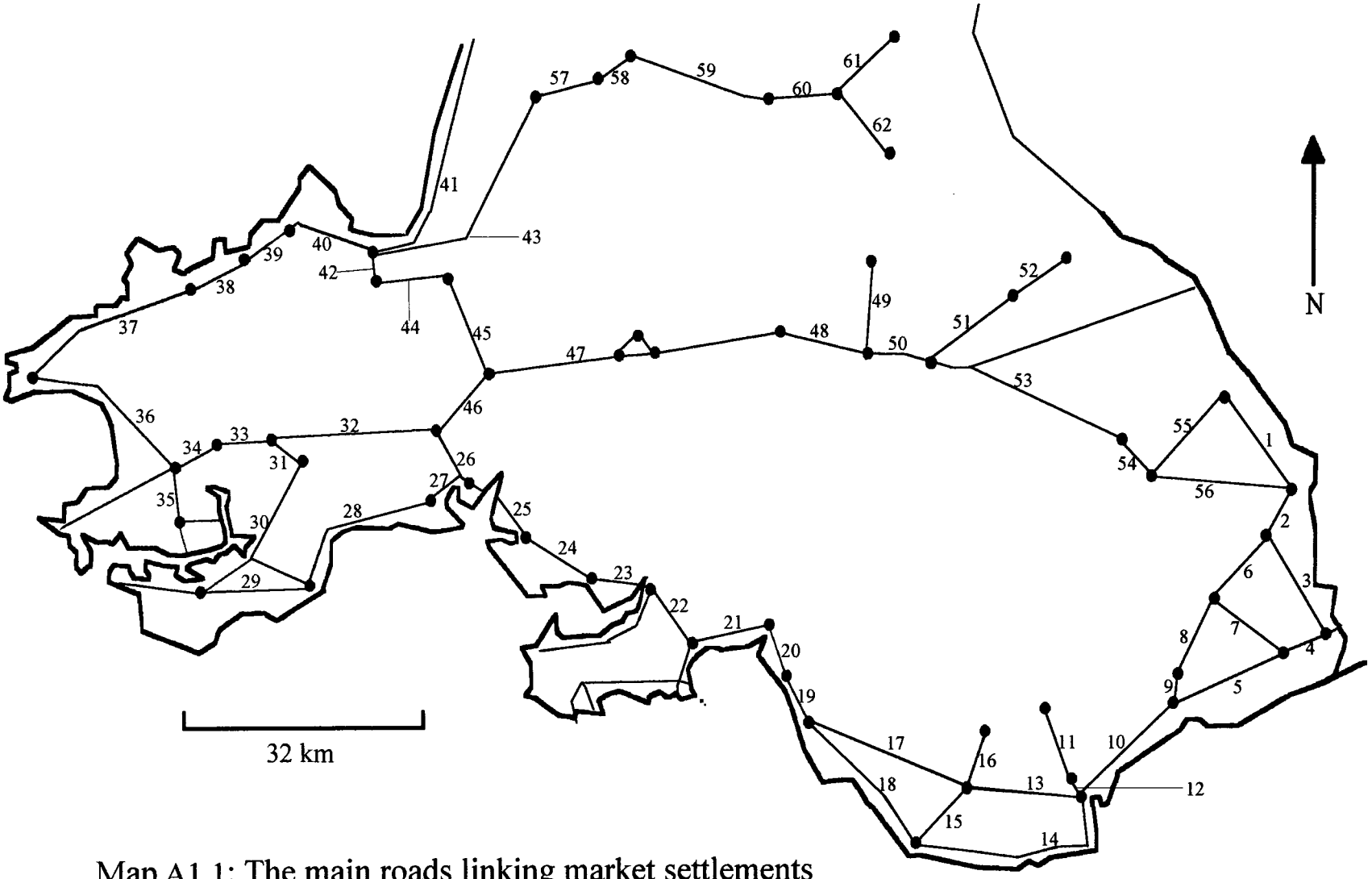
Section 1: Grosmont to Monmouth. This route largely follows the course of the River Monnow and takes in Skenfrith before reaching Monmouth.

Section 2: Monmouth to Trelech. This route is, for the most part, preserved by the B4293. Although the modern road deviates in places and runs alongside the holloway for part of its course. Several other holloways vary the number of approaches to Trelech.

Section 3: Trelech to Chepstow. Two possible main routes are evident. The first heads from Trelech to the River Wye and follows its course to Chepstow. The second follows a more inland route by way of Tintern Parva and St. Arvans to Chepstow.

Section 4: Chepstow to Llanfair Discoed. There appears to have been an absence of a direct route from Chepstow to Llanfair Discoed. It appears that the Roman road past Caerwent, heading to Caerleon would have been used with a minor route deviating to Llanfair Discoed.

Section 5: Llanfair Discoed to Newport. The main Roman road forms the basis of this route.



Map A1.1: The main roads linking market settlements

Section 6: Trelech to Usk. Heads out of Trelech to Parkhouse, via Llansoy to Gwernesney and on to Usk.

Section 7: Usk to Llanfair Discoed. Leaves Usk heading to Llanllowell to Llantrisant and continues south east to Llanfair Discoed.

Section 8: Caerleon to Usk. Follows the Roman road over Llanhennock ridge. However, a holloway has formed alongside the stretch of Roman road here. Picks up with, and follows the course of the River Usk.

Section 9: Caerleon to Newport. Several possibilities here, one is to follow the road up over Christchurch down to Langstone and pick up with the Roman road.

Section 10: Follows the line of the Roman road into the Vale of Glamorgan, later known as the Portway, subsequently forming the basis of the A48.

Section 11: Caerphilly to Cardiff. This road later formed the basis for the A469.

Section 12: Llandaff to Cardiff. Follows an alignment approximate to the River Taff.

Section 13 and 17: Cardiff to Cowbridge. Cowbridge to Kenfig. The Portway through Glamorgan on the line of the Roman road, later the A48.

Section 14 and 18: Coastal road, Cardiff to Llantwit. Llantwit to Kenfig. Leaves Cardiff follows track to Llandough, to Cosmeston, through Sully to Barry and on to Llantwit.

Section 15 and 16: Llantwit to Cowbridge. Cowbridge to Llantrissant. The main north/south axis road through the Vale of Glamorgan. Several possible minor deviations, although the main alignment of Llantrissant to Cowbridge is, for the most part, preserved in the A4222. The road from Cowbridge to Llantwit passes through Llanmihangel.

Sections 19 to 22: Kenfig to Aberafan. Aberafan to Neath. Neath to Swansea. Swansea to Loughor. Continuation of the Portway, in alignment with A48 as far as Neath. Exact route from Neath to Swansea is uncertain. Swansea to Loughor road follows the approximate alignment of the B4620.

Sections 23 to 26: Loughor to Llanelli. Llanelli to Kidwelly. Kidwelly to Llanstephen. Loughor to Llanelli road heads to Bynea and Pemberton before reaching Llanelli. Between Llanelli and Kidwelly there is no plausible alternative to the route used by the B4308. Kidwelly to Llanstephen is interrupted by the River

Towy. A ferry operated here in the Middle Ages. An alternative option would be to head to Carmarthen.

Sections 27 to 31: Llanstephen to Laugharne. Laugharne to Tenby. Tenby to Pembroke. Pembroke to Narbeth. Narbeth to Llawhaden. From Llanstephen an upstream crossing of the Cywyn would be necessary before reaching Laugharne. From there the road heads to Pendine, Marros and on to Tenby. From Tenby the road heads by way of Manorbier and Lamphey to Pembroke. From Pembroke to Cosheston, taking in Jeffreyston and to Narbeth by way of Templeton. The modern B4313 preserves the route to Llawhaden.

Sections 32, 33 & 34: St. Clears to Llawhaden. Llawhaden to Wiston. Wiston to Haverfordwest. With only slight deviations the medieval road from St. Clears to Llawhaden largely follows the A40, deviating as it meets the B4313. A small lane links Wiston and Llawhaden which continues to Haverfordwest.

Section 35: Haverfordwest to Rosemarket. Heads south by way of Merlin's bridge and lower Freystrop.

Sections 36 to 40: Haverfordwest to St. David's. St. David's to Fishguard. Fishguard to Newport. Newport to St. Dogmaels. St. Dogmaels to Cardigan. Haverfordwest to St. David's medieval road is overlaid by the A487 which continues as far as Newport where the modern road deviates from the medieval route. The latter heads towards the coast taking in St. Dogmaels the continuing to Cardigan.

Section 41: Cardigan to north Wales. Coastal route shown on the Gough map.

Sections 42, 44, 45: Cardigan to Cilgerran. Cilgerran to Newcastle Emlyn. Newcastle Emlyn to Carmarthen. The most direct route between Cardigan and Cilgerran is by way of the Afon Teifi. The road between the two was less direct. A more direct route linked Cardigan with Newcastle Emlyn, the road from Cilgerran links up with this route.

Section 46 and 47: Carmarthen to St. Clears. Carmarthen to Dryslwyn and on to Llandovery. The modern A40 has cut over parts of the older road that was likely to have been the medieval route between Carmarthen and St. Clears. Parts of the original run parallel with the A40. Carmarthen to Llandovery follows the Roman road that forms the basis of the A40.

Section 48, 49, 50: Llandovery to Trecastle. Trecastle to Llandew. Trecastle to Brecon. Follows the line of the Roman road, with the exception of the deviation to Llandew, a route that heads north.

Sections 51 and 52: Brecon to Talgarth. Talgarth to Hay. Continues on the line of the Roman road.

Section 53: Brecon to Crickhowell. Largely follows the modern A40.

Section 54, 55, 56: Crickhowell to Abergavenny. Abergavenny to Grosmont. Abergavenny to Monmouth. Continuation of the A40, the medieval route runs parallel to the modern road in places.

Sections 57 to 60: Lampeter to Llandewi Brefi. Llandewi Brefi to Tregaron. Tregaron to Builth. Builth to Glascwm. The modern B4343 follows the medieval road linking Lampeter to Llandewi Brefi to Tregaron. The road from Tregaron to Builth takes in Drum Dhu, Abergwesyn and Beulah and takes the Garth road to Builth. The road from there to Glascwm goes via Llanelwedd and Little Hill.

Section 61: Glascwm to New Radnor. This route is fairly straightforward heading to Colva and through Old Radnor.

Section 62: Glascwm to Painscastle. The most direct route south to Painscastle was over Red Hill, although this may have been too arduous for many and the preferred route may have taken in Bryngwyn and Rosgoch.

Appendix Two: A Case Study of Cillonydd, a Grange of Llantarnam Abbey[1]

Llantarnam's grange at Cillonydd is situated on the Mynydd Maen ridge, an upland area in the south Wales valleys. This area had previously been subject to two earlier assessments, firstly in relation to a failed scheme to establish a wind-farm and secondly as part of the 'Uplands Initiative' undertaken on behalf of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales by the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust.[2] The main aim of this latter survey was to correct the under-representation of upland areas in the Glamorgan Gwent SMR. The main conclusion drawn by the author of the GGAT report, Martin Locock, was that tension between the various landowners and commoners from the Middle Ages onwards had resulted in limiting the overall development of the land on Mynydd Maen as a whole.[3] The existence of a monastic site at Cillonydd was mentioned in this report, but not explored.[4]

Much of the fieldwork element into the grange site, described in this case study, was undertaken by the author between 1997 and 1998. Detailed source material for Welsh Cistercian granges in the Middle Ages tends to be scarce, as noted above detailed accounts survive for Merthyrgeryn alone. Later periods are better illuminated in terms of references in manorial surveys, tithe surveys and other accounts. All of which were consulted during the research. Fieldwork was undertaken to consider how the landscape currently appears, a task which was undertaken along with a regressive study of maps.

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[1] A full report on the work at Cillonydd and at nearby Hafod Fach, including the post-medieval evidence can be found in a recently published paper: Weeks, R. (2002) "A post-Dissolution Monastic Site and its Landscape: Cillonydd on Mynydd Maen," *Gw. Loc. Hist.* 92 3-24

[2] Locock, M. *GGAT CUR1: Uplands Survey, Mynydd Maen and Mynydd Henllys*, unpublished report (97/005), Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust

[3] Locock, M. (1997) "Mynydd Maen and Mynydd Henllys (ST29) Upland Survey" *Arch. Wales* 37, 51

[4] *Ibid.*

Site Description and History

The Cistercian abbey of Llantarnam was founded *c.*1179 by a colony sent from Strata Florida Abbey. A grange was established at Cillonydd soon after. Located on the western slopes of Mynydd Maen at *c.* 330m OD, Cillonydd today consists of two derelict farm buildings and a barn located at the centre of a pattern of enclosed fields and two principal areas of woodland, Coed Cillonydd and Coppice Wood (Map appendix.1). At its western limit is a coal tip - Twyn-y-Gnol - comprised of industrial waste from the Celynen south Colliery. Twyn-y-Gnol dominates the skyline and casts an imposing shadow over Newbridge and the surrounding area. Several trackways pass through the site, and a leat enters the site at the north-east and terminates in a basin near the buildings. The Cillonydd estate occupies some 210 acres of land which makes up 2.5% of the total land surface classified as 'upland' on Mynydd Maen.[5]

Although a post-Conquest medieval grange is recorded as having operated at Cillonydd, an earlier date of antiquity for the site may be implied by the place-name. The Rev. Dr. D.H. Williams has suggested that the place-name element "Cil-" may be interpreted as "cell" and as such could indicate the existence of a pre-Norman religious site.[6] Hobbs and Osborne, do not dwell on this aspect, and simply translate the name Cillonydd as meaning a 'quiet place'.[7] Llanderfel - the site of a former parochial chapel on the eastern slopes of Mynydd Maen - is a known pre-Norman foundation and much has been made of its early medieval Arthurian connections. Llanderfel is reputedly named after, and during the Middle Ages is reported to have

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[5] Land above 240m OD

[6] Williams, D.H. (1976) *The White Monks in Gwent and the Border* (Pontypool, Griffin Press), 81

[7] Hobbs, G & Osborne, G.O. *The Placenames of Western Gwent* (Abertillery, Old Bakehouse Press)

possessed relics of, Derfel Cadarn, one of Arthur's warriors, who retired to the monastic life following the battle of Camlann.[8]

Sheep farming was a vitally important part of the Cistercian grange economy in south Wales prior to the fourteenth century. The *Taxatio Ecclesiastica* of 1291 records that Llantarnam Abbey held one carucate of land at Cadlonet (Cillonydd) and was rearing 588 sheep in total on its estates.[9] It would not be unreasonable to imagine a fair proportion of these sheep being grazed on Cillonydd land. Llantarnam never became one of the richer abbeys and suffered badly during the agricultural crises of the fourteenth century, so much that in 1317 the abbot of Llantarnam complained that, "our abbey is so poor that it cannot sustain barely twenty monks".[10] Worse was to follow as in 1400 the abbey threw its support behind Owain Glyndŵr. When Glyndŵr's supporters attacked Usk in 1405, they did so having already confessed and been absolved by the abbot of Llantarnam. As J.F. O'Sullivan has put it, "the (Glyndŵr) rebellion left the Welsh Cistercians materially depleted and spiritually deteriorated."[11]

Aerial photographs of the Cillonydd site taken in 1985 revealed crop-marks in the field known as Cae Egwlys, literally 'Church field'. D.H. Williams has listed Cae Egwlys as the site of a possible grange chapel, and had previously commented that there was a tradition of burials there.[12] Crop-marks have also been noted in the field

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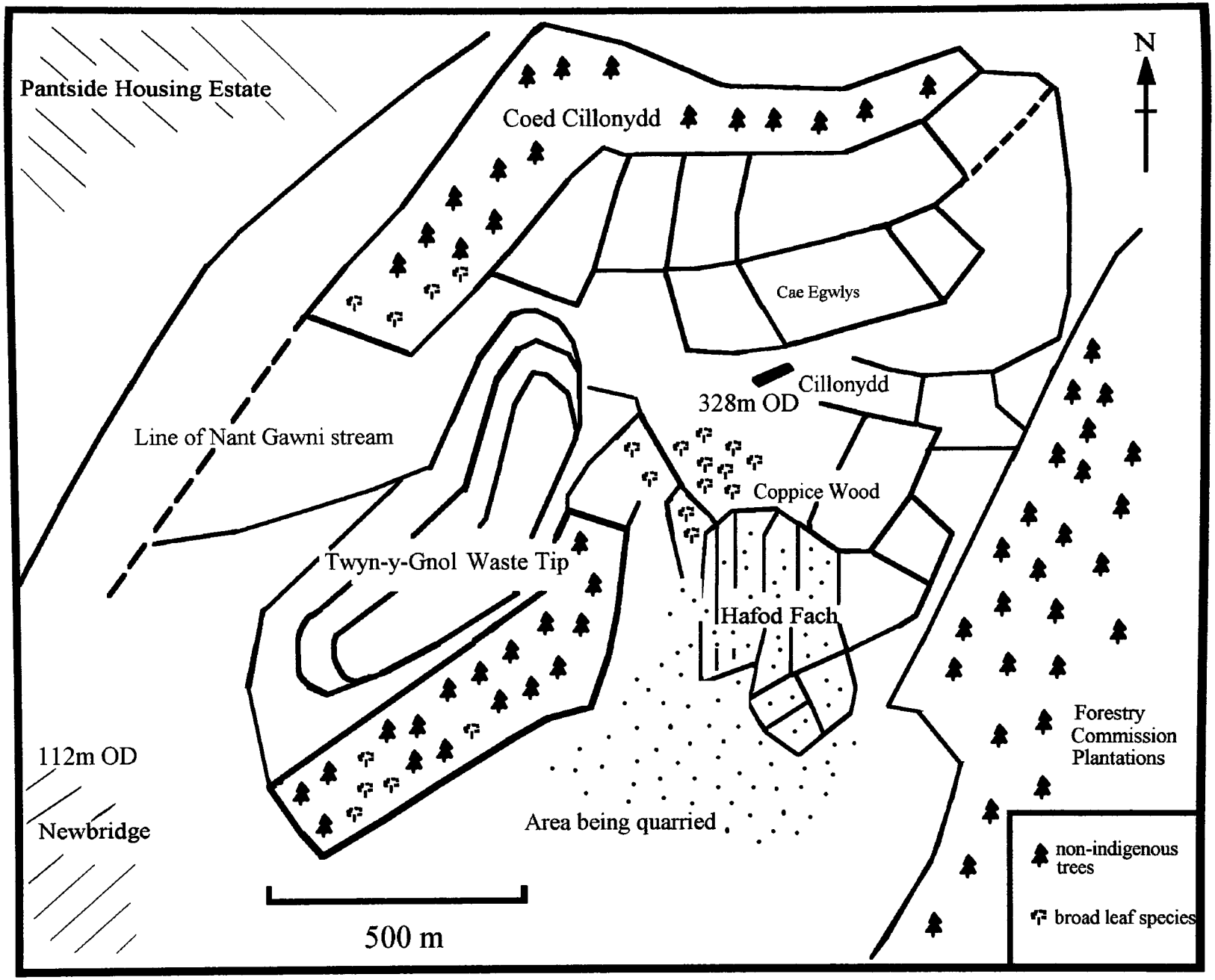
[8] Llanderfel in Meirioneth has a more convincing claim to association as the monastery of Derfel Cadarn

[9] A carucate being the area that could be covered by a plough-team in one day, approximately 150 acres at Cillonydd

[10] Williams, D.H. (1965) "The Cistercians in Wales: Some Aspects of their Economy," *Arch. Camb.* 114, 30

[11] O'Sullivan, J.F. (1947) *The Cistercians in Wales and Monmouthshire 1140-1540*, 110

[12] Williams, D.H. (2001) *op. cit.*, 305; Williams, D.H. (1976) *op. cit.*, 71



Map A 2.1: The contemporary Cillonydd landscape

to the north of Cae Egwlys, although their nature remains uncertain. Martin Locock has speculated that as these features appear to be a large rectilinear building they may represent a temporary structure from the modern period.[13] An aerial photograph of Cillonydd taken in August 1991 shows a trace of a linear feature in a third field to the north-east of Cae Egwlys, although on this occasion no such features could be seen in Cae Egwlys or its neighbouring field.[14] Both Locock and Williams agree that the locality is worthy of further investigation and the find of a single un-dated iron sword in Cae Egwlys is noted on the Glamorgan Gwent SMR. Although R.E. Kay commented that two swords had been found on the site at around the time of his visit in 1949. Since then however, the removal of topsoil from fields around the buildings for use on Newport housing estates in the first half of the twentieth century must be borne in mind when considering the archaeological potential in these fields. It is not known if Cae Egwlys was affected in this way. When the site was revisited in October 2001 a temporary structure for animal feed and shelter had been erected in the enlarged Cae Egwlys, although not in the location of the crop-marks.

Following the Dissolution of Llantarnam Abbey in 1536 Cillonydd initially remained in the hands of the abbot of Llantarnam before being leased to John Parker and then to William Morgan.[15] It remained within the Morgan family until 1707 when the estates of the family were divided into two. The value of Cillonydd at this time is recorded at OE £238 3*s.* 2*d.*[16] In 1847 the farm was owned by Elizabeth Francis Webb as part of Llanover estate and farmed by James Williams.[17] In 1878

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[13] Locock, M. *GGAT CUR1: Uplands Survey, Mynydd Maen and Mynydd Henllys*, unpublished report (97/005), Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust, 14

[14] Caerphilly County Borough Council, aerial photograph collection. Contact scale 1:10,000

[15] PRO: SC6/2497/8, 9

[16] Gwent Record Office (hereafter GwRO): D.454.605

[17] National Library of Wales tithe map and apportionment for the manor of Mynyddislwyn, 1847

Cillonydd was leased to an iron-master from Lancashire, William Crossley and his partner John Wesley on a lease of 30 years with the intention of mining coal and other minerals at the site. Their plans failed when Crossley was declared bankrupt in 1879, followed by Wesley in 1880, seemingly as the result of a downturn in the iron industry.[18] During the twentieth century the site has been run in several guises: as a public house, a farmstead and as the 'Double Diamond' equestrian trekking centre. The site is currently owned by the company engaged in nearby mineral extraction and temporarily leased to a local farmer who grazes sheep on its land.

The Landscape Study

The landscape study initially sought to consider the landscape evidence for the medieval grange site and its components. Once the extent of the grange land had been identified and the components of that landscape analysed, the project was widened so as to consider the surrounding landscape and to place the overall findings into their wider context. Using the tithe-free method the extent of the grange estate was identified, comprising of a varied parcel of land of 210 acres in total, running as far north as the Nant Gawni stream with two main components: 60 acres are made up of woodland, and 150 of farmland. The farmland is characterised by a pattern of enclosed fields and a network of trackways running across the landscape. The landscape study considered all of the main topographical features, the results are discussed below.

(i) Woodland

The woodland is divided into two principal areas: Coppice wood and Coed Cillonydd, the latter being the largest area. Today the vegetation at Coed Cillonydd consists of largely non-indigenous tree species of the type found widely on Forestry Commission managed land in the area. Examples include sitka spruce and Japanese

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[18] GwRO: D.454.605

larch. This situation came about as a result of industrialisation when many hillsides were stripped of their natural vegetation as wood was needed for pit props in the mining industry and for other industrial uses, notably for charcoal. Coppice wood has not been affected in this way and evidence of coppicing can be seen within this small area. It is likely that these areas of woodland provided the grange with fuel for domestic use and small scale industrial needs. Areas of woodland comprising of predominantly broad leaf species - for example, oak, beech, birch, ash and hazel - are becoming increasingly rare in the valleys. There are some examples to be found around Newbridge at Bryn Gwyn and around Blackwood. Some younger growths of broad leaf trees are present on the lower slopes of Coed Cillonydd, but they are not in abundance.

(ii) Buildings

The buildings are now uninhabited and primarily consist of a large house, presumably built in the early twentieth century, a barn and a small farmhouse which dates from the early seventeenth century. This latter building ties in well with the creation of the field pattern. A roofing beam in the farmhouse is stamped with the date 1610. The period 1530 to 1640 is generally regarded as being the period of the great rural rebuilding in Wales. During this time it gradually became more common for rural buildings to feature more than one storey. The farmhouse at Cillonydd is characteristic of a building style common to south east Wales at this time. It features two storeys with a spiral staircase and a stone fireplace built up to the chimney located inside the building. R.E. Kay was struck by this building when he visited the site on 7 September 1949, he commented on the "interesting little farmhouse . . . seventeenth century or earlier with later alterations and additions." Kay also noted the barn which he described as being 'dated 1869, but this is only the date of partial rebuilding."[19] Within the barn four distinct phases of construction can be identified,

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[19] R.E. Kay, *Notebooks 1936 - 1993 series 2 vol. I 27/1/48-19/5/51*, entry 7/9/49, 82 call number: MS B2.2 held by the RCAHMW, Aberystwyth

from possible medieval monastic foundations through to seventeenth and nineteenth century rebuilding and twentieth century consolidation and repair.

Consideration must turn to whether the original medieval grange buildings occupied the same ground as the later buildings. This is particularly pertinent given the uncertainty over the interpretation of the aerial photographs of Cae Egwlys and neighbouring fields. As noted above, the barn does appear to feature the oldest structural remains on the site of the current buildings and there is every possibility that these remains could be medieval. Furthermore, as will be seen below, the location of the water resources - a well and a pond of presumed medieval origin - near the later buildings adds weight the case for continuity of settlement on the only reasonably level surface area on Cillonydd land. A low wall of unknown, although apparently early, origin encloses part of the twentieth century farmhouse on its northern side. It is curved at the corners as opposed to being set at a right-angle, which is a characteristic feature of pre-modern upland dwellings. A stone support - similar to one that adjoins the barn - forms part of the structure. These features are not incorporated into the recent buildings on the site. Undoubtedly it formed part of a much larger structure which formerly occupied the site now taken by the twentieth century farmhouse. Its nature and origin are unknown, other than the fact that it must pre-date the twentieth century farmhouse. Overall, it seems that the site of the current buildings appears to have also been the site of the medieval grange buildings, although a question mark remains as to whether there was a chapel in the field known today as Cae Egwlys.

During the field study of 1997-98 the buildings were in a hazardous state of disrepair. The site was revisited in October 2001 and it was noted that the fabric of all the structures, with the exception of the barn, was greatly depleted. The larger house

that was attached to the seventeenth century farmhouse has largely disappeared, either through collapsing, deliberate demolition or a combination of both. This has led to the seventeenth century farmhouse appearing as a stand alone building, which originally it undoubtedly was but did not appear so in 1997-98. A one story modern brick built structure that was located in front of the seventeenth century farmhouse in 1997-98 has now been demolished and the building materials removed from the site. A similar structure to the east of the site, near the barn, remains.

Roads and Trackways at Cillonydd

As noted in chapter four, incidences of deliberate road construction were rare in the Middle Ages. A programme of road construction would have been both expensive and labour intensive. As such it rested with those who had the resources, motive and money to carry it out. In south Wales this would have meant the monasteries, the Crown and the Marcher lords. D.H. Williams has considered some examples of deliberately engineered monastic routes and suggests the Stony Way near Tintern Abbey as an example of a constructed medieval monastic road.[20] Most routes that came into existence during the Middle Ages were 'sunken roads' or holloways, derived from the Saxon term *holanweg*. In essence, a path was cleared and a track formed through regular use. They tended to become very muddy and filled up with dung, which farmers often dug out to use as manure on their fields. Hence the path became a 'sunken road,' in some cases becoming deep enough to hit bedrock. In studying the trackways at Cillonydd the author has established and utilised a general principle that if a routeway directly links two settlements with contemporary histories it is likely that the routeway itself shares a substantial part of that history unless it can be proven otherwise.

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[20] Williams, D.H. (1998) "Cistercian Roads and Routeways", *Tarmac Papers* 2, 231-46

Four significant stretches of trackway pass through Cillonydd land, two of which are bisected by a modern road running beyond the Cillonydd estate to the east, and along the top of Mynydd Maen ridge. For convenience the trackways are labelled A to D on Map A2.2 which also emphasises the current field plan and the location of the woodland. Track A is the most substantial and can be traced the furthest, it is known locally as the 'Roman road' which may be because it forms part of a route that can be traced to Caerleon. During R.E. Kay's visit to the site he specifically noted the existence of track A which he described as a 'green lane.'[21] To the west the track cannot be traced beyond Newbridge, whilst to the east it was possible to trace a route to Llantarnam Abbey which would have been approximately a day's walk away. After negotiating Mynydd Maen ridge the track descends towards Cwmbran passing almost alongside Llanderfel farm which was a monastic site contemporary with Cillonydd. D.H. Williams describes this track thus, "(Llanderfel) is passed by an old road, Hewlett-y-Fforest, deeply sunken through long usage."[22] In the post-Conquest period Llanderfel served as a parochial chapel, pilgrimage cell and tavern. The latter would no doubt have been much appreciated by a traveller coming from Llantarnam and heading over Mynydd Maen to Cillonydd or a destination beyond. To put the journey required into perspective, Llantarnam is at 30m above OD with Llanderfel at 268m and Cillonydd at 330m above OD. A route rising over four hundred metres in altitude as the top of Mynydd Maen is negotiated. The track is partially lost in modern Cwmbran but can be picked up as heading towards Llantarnam passing through Abbey farm and south of the ruins along Dowlais Brook towards Caerleon by way of Lodge Hill. It seems likely that this was an established route in the Middle Ages due

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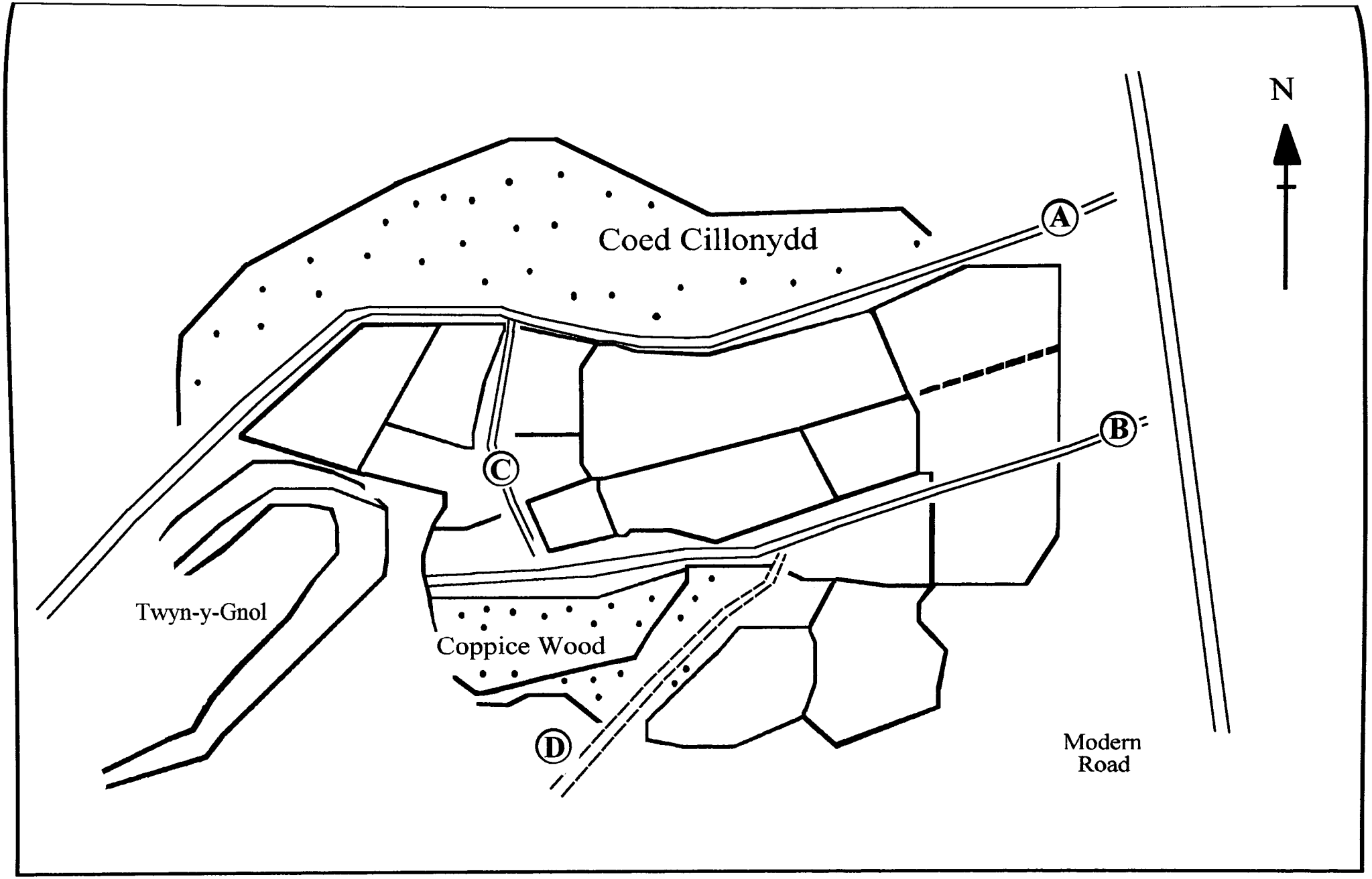
[21] R.E. Kay, *Notebooks* MS B2.2

[22] Williams, D.H. (1976) *The White Monks in Gwent and the Border*, 81



Map A2.2: Current field plan with trackways labelled A to D

to the places that it links. An earlier date of origin cannot be proven although if it is a Roman route it could be speculated that it was a more direct upland route linking Caerleon with the fort at Gelligaer. Excavation by way of cutting sections along its path may be the only way of determining this. Even then, the exact nature of Roman road construction in upland areas is little understood which makes identification difficult.[23]

Track A could well pre-date the monastic grange as it runs past the grange buildings and not directly towards them. It is easily the most well defined stretch of track on this part of Mynydd Maen, although it is less apparent on the ground as it passes over the top of Mynydd Maen ridge. Given the early medieval settlement at Llanderfel and the suspected early medieval presence at Cillonydd, a pre-Conquest date of antiquity for this route could be suggested, although a Roman origin is not proven. Both Penrhys and Llanderfel were pilgrimage centres of Llantarnam Abbey with track A forming part of a pilgrimage route to Penrhys to the west and Llanderfel to the east.[24] The journey from west to east negotiating Mynydd Maen is less demanding than from east to west, but still very challenging. Using public footpaths the author's best time was 20 minutes to make the steep ascent from Woodfield at the bottom of Pantside (160m OD) up to the Cillonydd site (west to east) at 328m OD.

Track B is less obvious on the ground, as in its first section a modern landrover track runs alongside it. This was clearly apparent in the 1997/8 study, however in 2001 a mechanical excavator used on the site had removed traces of the separate tracks. Track B heads towards the buildings and then past them to Twyn-y-Gnol. A third section of track runs across the fields from the buildings linking track A to track B (labelled track C, Map A2.2). Effectively it seems that a detour

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[23] Ken Jermy, *personal communication*

[24] Gray M. (1996) "Penrhys: The Archaeology of a Pilgrimage", *Morgannwg* 40, 10-32

would have been made from track A towards track B in order to enter the Cillonydd estate and travelling towards the grange buildings before heading towards Pen-yr-Rhyn (now Twyn-y-Gnol) to link up with A once again. Interestingly, track B does not continue its westerly course directly into what was Pen-yr-Rhyn land, instead it veers north following the western boundary of the Cillonydd estate to link up with A. Today it could be thought that the construction of Twyn-y-Gnol interrupted its path, however, early maps show that this was not the case (Map A2.3). Track B does not seem to have encroached on Pen-yr-Rhyn land at all. The continuation of track C forming the 'middle' trackway across Cillonydd land appears to be a modern track created through the use of landrover vehicles. It does not feature on early maps. Track D also appears to be a modern construct and features stonework in its bank, however it may be a lot earlier than track C as it is shown on the earliest maps and led to a nearby farmstead at Hafod Fach before quarrying interrupted its path. It is likely that this is an old trackway that was 'upgraded' and maintained in the early modern period through regular use as the most direct route to the lowlands. Track D descends more gently than track A.

(iv) Field Systems

A manorial survey of Abercarn - which included Cillonydd within its area - dating from 29 September 1645 reveals that enclosure had been taking place widely by agreement up until that time. After that date specific provisions were detailed so as to regulate the process in the future. These measures included a requirement for new tenants who wished to enclose their land to also enclose that belonging to a neighbour as well if that neighbour happened to be an established customary tenant who so desired it.[25] Enclosure by agreement accounts for the irregular field patterns that are to be found

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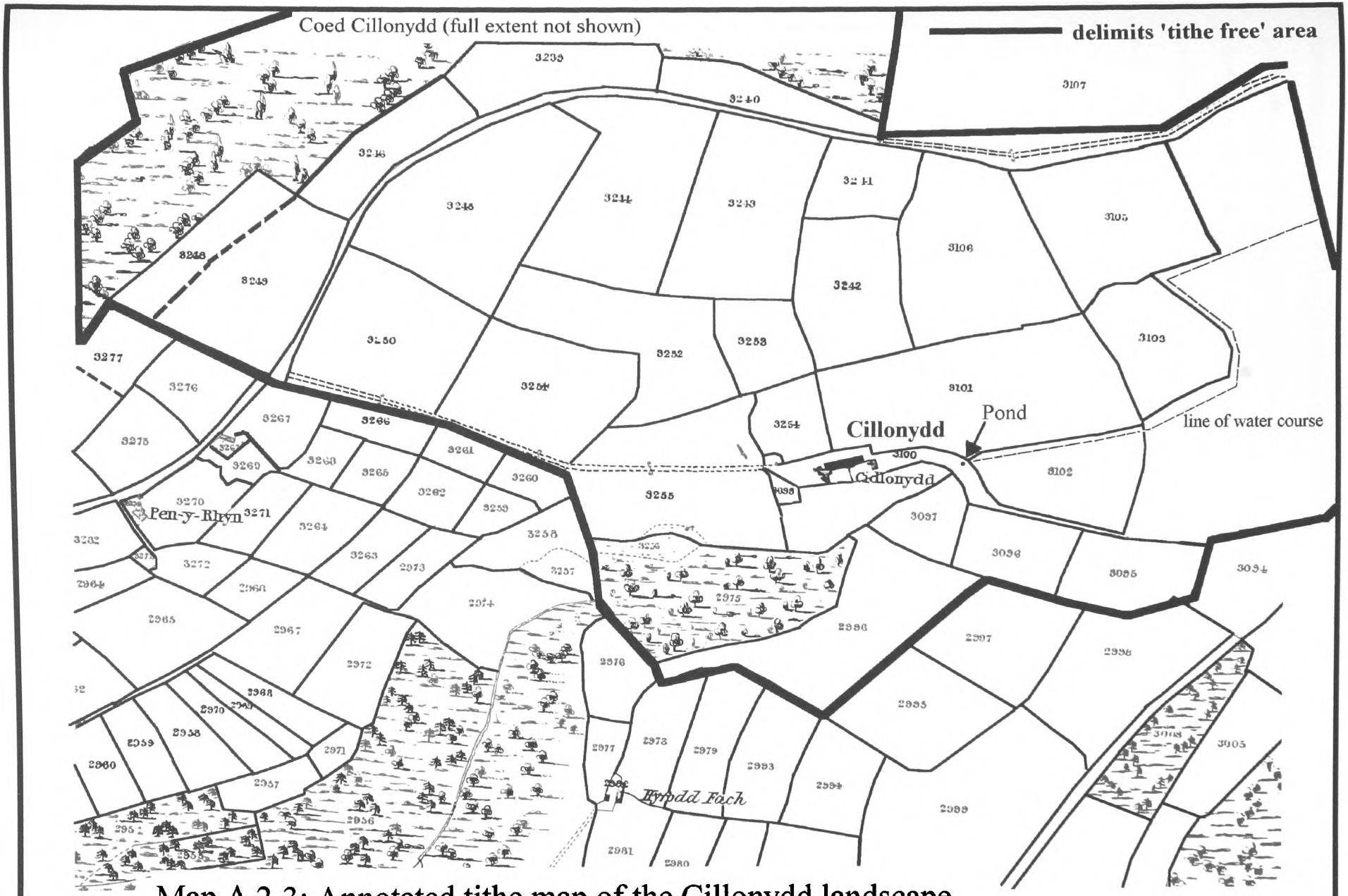
[25] Newport Reference Library: M000.333 'A Survey of the lordship of Abercarne on 29 September 1645'



Map A 2.3: Annotated tithe map of the Cillonydd landscape

throughout the area. Although the current field pattern at Cillonydd reflects the preference of modern agricultural technology for fewer larger fields, the number of changes to the field pattern that have taken place over the last two hundred years are evident when comparing the tithe map field pattern to the current field plan (*c.f.* Map A2.3 with Map A2.2).

Accounts survive which give some indication of the day to day activities of Cistercian monks in south Wales during the Middle Ages. Among these are references to digging ditches and establishing hedgerows to create enclosures.[26] Presumed medieval ditches border the fields at the fringe of the monastic estate and a bank encloses the western border of Cae Egwlys, although the internal field pattern may not be of medieval origin. The building work at Cillonydd and also at Hafod Fach combined with the documentary evidence point to a seventeenth century reorganisation of the landscape on Mynydd Maen with much of the current fieldscape being laid out in the period 1610 to *c.* 1645. To what extent this pattern reflects the earlier land division of the monastic grange is unclear.

(v) Water Resources and the Leat

Virtually all of the farmsteads on this part of Mynydd Maen possess private sources of water supply, usually a well. In some instances they have been incorporated into later buildings. The well at Cillonydd is located near the buildings although it is no longer functional, having long been filled in. Other farm buildings on the ridge have functioning wells with quite extensive shafts of 20m or more. Additionally, a leat runs through Cillonydd land entering the grange precinct in the north east. A series of channels which lead to a pond near the group of buildings are capable of carrying substantially more water than they do presently. The pond that it leads into is also holding only a fraction of the water that its capacity could permit.

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[26] Williams D.H. (1967) "Llantarnam Abbey" *Mon. Ant.*, 142

This raises several questions such as where did the water go? and is this leat system a medieval construct? The field pattern seems to work around these channels with no section being incorporated within a field, suggesting that at the time of enclosure in the early seventeenth century the stream had priority. This may simply reflect the continuing importance of an important resource. The pond may have been used as a fishpond or for small scale industrial use, although it is unclear whether the gradient from the leat would have been sufficient enough to support a mill.

Two potential points of origin for the water that once fed the water channel at Cillonydd were identified, both approximately 1km away uphill: Firstly, Pen-y-Caeau literally 'Head of the Fields' to the north, which supplies water to the Nant Gawni stream (the northern boundary of the Cillonydd grange estate) as well as a nearby farmhouse. Alternatively, a second feature to the north east acts as a basin and appears to be man made but serves no obvious purpose, it may have once had some connection with the grange at Cillonydd or could simply be a product of later industrial activity in the area. Any channels linking this basin to the water channels at Cillonydd would have been disrupted by the construction of an upland road which cuts across common land linking the farmhouses, and which is also used by lorries working at a nearby quarry.

Discussion

The upland location of Cillonydd made it ideal for sheep-farming in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries as crops tended to fare better when grown in the more favourable climate of the lowlands. This does not mean that crop production did not take place on Cillonydd land during the Middle Ages. Growing crops may have played a small part in the economy of the grange in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in order to satisfy domestic needs, only becoming more important during the fourteenth century as a result of wider economic conditions. The economic downturn of the fourteenth century was attributable to a number of factors. The crises period

and 'land hunger' of 1315-22 saw marginal land - areas like the uplands - being more widely exploited.[27] The consequent discontent led to social unrest which was exacerbated by long running political turmoil. In 1153 wheat was fetching 1*s.* a quarter at market.[28] Prices rose steadily in the remainder of the twelfth century, although arable farming featured little on monastic grange estates in Wales at this time. By 1316, the year after the rebellion led by Llewelyn Bren, wheat prices rose dramatically from 5 to 7*s.* a quarter in the same year and oats from 2*s.* to 9*s.* as a result of shortages attributed to the agricultural distress.[29] The following year wheat prices more than doubled, fetching up to 18*s.* a quarter at markets across south Wales.[30] It is hard not to imagine diversification taking place on some monastic estates, partly out of necessity due to shortages of wheat and other crops for domestic needs, but also to take advantage of the high prices that wheat and other staple crops were fetching at market. Falling wool prices during the fourteenth century only encouraged such diversification. Some abbeys began leasing out their lands to private tenants, although there is no evidence to reveal whether this occurred at Cillonydd.

In 1610, when a farmhouse was constructed at Cillonydd, wheat was fetching 35*s.* a quarter at market. For the seventeenth century this was actually quite low and it came about as the result of a run of exceptionally good harvests which drove prices down and so enabled many of the poorer members of society to enjoy wheaten bread for the first time in their lives.[31] This situation did not last long. The trade depression

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[27] Bailey, M. (1989) "The Concept of the Margin in the Medieval Economy", *Ec. Hist. Rev.*, 2nd series, 42, 1 -17; Kershaw, I. (1973) "The Great Famine and Agrarian Crises in England 1315 -22" *Past & Present* 59, 1 - 50

[28] Ballard, A. (ed.) (1913) *British Borough Charters 1042 - 1216,* (Cambridge, University Press), 63

[29] PRO: SC6/1202/7,8,9

[30] PRO: SC6/920/23

[31] Bowden, P. (1967) "Agricultural Prices, Farm Profits, and Rents," in Thirsk J. (ed.) *The Agrarian History of England and Wales vol. IV 1500 - 1640* (Cambridge, University Press), 631

of the 1620s saw wheat prices begin to rise steadily and they continued to do so throughout the first half of the seventeenth century. A dramatic rise was experienced between 1640 and 1649 when the price of wheat rose from 41*s.* a quarter to a peak of 85*s.* a quarter. In the eighteenth century a period of sustained good weather from 1715 to 1765 allowed good harvests which before long saw the average price of wheat fall to as low as the early seventeenth century prices of between 35 and 40*s.* a quarter. As the 1645 manorial survey reveals, enclosure was taking place widely on Mynydd Maen and the surrounding area. The dramatic rise in prices was undoubtedly a decisive factor in this. When R.E. Kay visited the site in 1958 he noted that some of the fields at Cillonydd were under the plough, revealing that arable production had continued to take place up to the mid-twentieth century.[32] During the fourteenth century with the leasing out of lands, many granges lost their isolated and self contained nature, developing so as to become quite indistinguishable from secular manors. Immediately following the Dissolution Cillonydd remained in the hands of the abbot of Llantarnam, before being leased out and eventually sold.[33]

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[32] R.E. Kay, *Notebooks* RCAHMW: MS B2.2.

[33] PRO: SC6/2497/1

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